THE AEKYOM

Kinship, Marriage and Descent on the Upper Fly River, Papua New Guinea

Robert C. Depew

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I hereby declare that the thesis entitled "The Aekyom: Kinship,Marriage and Descent on the Upper Fly River, Papua New Guinea",is the result of my own work and has been composed entirely by myself.

Robert C.Depew

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ORTHOGRAPHY

There are 27 phonemes in the Fly River Aekyom language, including 6 vowels, 4 dipthongs and 17 consonants. These, with their nearest English or French equivalents, are given in the list below.

Phoneme	Pronunciation
a	as in 'father'
ae	as in 'cat'
e	as in 'get'
i	as in 'si'
o	as in 'saw'
u	as in 'food'
ei	as in 'day'
ai	as in 'tie'
au	as in 'how'
oi	as in 'toy'
p'	as in 'pin'
p	as in 'bin' (non-voiced)
b	as in 'bin' (voiced)
t'	as in 'tin'
t	as in 'din'
d	as in 'din' (heavily voiced)
k'	as in 'king'
k	as in 'ken'
g	as in 'ken' (heavily voiced)
m	as in 'me'
n	as in 'now'
ng	as in 'sing'
r	as in Scottish 'r'
s	as in 'sit'
h	as in 'hat'
w	as in 'was'
y	as in 'yet'

The Aekyom language is also tonal but there appears to be only the simple constrast of high (´) and low (`) with most words retaining their own tone in any type of frame sentence.

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the status of descent and group formation among the Aekyom people inhabiting the region of the Upper Fly River in Papua New Guinea's Western Province. Its principal aim is to identify and define certain structural and symbolic themes that inform a theoretical and ethnographic interpretation of descent and group formation, as well as to reveal those principles of organization which are central to the social, cultural and religious order.

Consistent with its ethnographic focus, the study develops a broad definition of descent in natural, cultural and supernatural terms and attempts to show how group categories, configurations, representations and interrelations at different levels of society reflect varying expressions of an indigenous theory of descent. Within this context the discussion is brought to bear on a wider range of topics which includes social classification, kinship and social organization, marriage, ritual, nomination, totemism and myth.

In general, it is argued that the coherence of the Aekyom theory of descent is based on principles of bilateral kinship and marriage exchange whose articulation in terms of a dialectical logic highlights their structural and functional complementarities and underscores the sociological and religious properties of a more inclusive model of societal and group structure in this region of New Guinea.

INTRODUCTION

The Aekyom are one of many indigenous peoples who inhabit the Ok Tedi Area, a particularly remote region in the interior of Papua New Guinea's Western Province. Being lowland forest dwellers, they have traditionally led a semi-nomadic way of life, living in dispersed hamlets and exploiting a wide variety of natural resources through hunting, fishing, gardening and gathering. These activities, which meet their immediate physical needs, also sustain a distinctive social and religious life whose values, beliefs, categories and principles of organization provide the focus for this study.

Originally, it was not my intention to undertake an ethnographic study of the Aekyom. Instead, I had planned to investigate totemic organization and ideology in the Trobriand Islands, a surprisingly neglected topic in Massim anthropology as a whole. However, certain political events involving perceived and actual abuses of research privileges by some previous investigators effectively vetoed my research request and I was forced to abandon the project. Later and at the suggestion of Professor Andrew Strathern, Director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies in Boroko, my anthropological interests were re-directed to the Aekyom, who seemed to be a promising group to study since little was known about them. More importantly, the potential cultural impact of mineral and related industrialization in the Ok Tedi Area together with nation-wide political promotion of indigenous cultural identity, traditions and the quality of life they represent had created a need for and provided legitimation of urgent ethnography in the Area as a whole. Thus, in contrast to the situation in Milne Bay, political obstacles to anthropological research in Western Province were minimized.

Under quite different circumstances, a request for anthropological study in the Ok Tedi Area was made over 30 years ago by Elkin (1953:36). However, most of the subsequent research was carried out in the mountain zone among the various Min or Mountain Ok language groups with little anthropological attention being directed towards the Lowlanders. The

neglect of lowland cultures in general and the Aekyom in particular seemed surprising to me since they were among the first of the Area's inhabitants to be contacted by Europeans. While certain administrative officials, explorers and natural scientists collected some useful information during the period of early and sustained contact, it still lacked the scope and depth to reveal the nature of cultural configurations in the lowland rain forests.

In general, the cultural divide separating lowland from mountain societies of the Ok Tedi Area is very real and visible. A mountainous divide extending from the Strickland River to the east, across the Ok Tedi Area and into Irian Jaya to the west constitutes a more or less "no-man's land" which tends to reinforce culturally distinct themes in the respective zones. Thus language, settlement patterns, ecology, social organization and aspects of religious life are very different among groups separated by this impressive geographical boundary. Yet nowhere along this frontier do the mountain and lowland peoples live in such close proximity and have such extensive contacts through trade, intermarriage and the diffusion of cultural traits as in the Ok Tedi Area. Given my research interests, it seemed that fieldwork among the Aekyom would satisfy several requirements and interrelated tasks, the more important of which were to:

(i) fulfill a general need for cultural information on indigenous peoples of the Ok Tedi Area;

(ii) make an original contribution to the ethnographic record of Papua New Guinea;

(iii) direct attention to the more general themes of cultural evolution and ethnohistory in the Area;

(iv) contribute to the areal study and comparison of social and religious thought and institutions; and

(v) address particular theoretical and methodological interests in the anthropological study of descent and group formation.

From December 1981 to November 1982 I conducted intensive fieldwork, mainly among a dialect group of Aekyom-speakers inhabiting

the vicinity of the Upper Fly River. In order to make comparisons with the remaining dialect groups, six weeks were spent among the Aekyom of South and West Awin Census Divisions gathering information on oral tradition, systems of classification, ritual and social organization, while one week each was spent with Aekyom adjacent to the northern mountain ranges and those who claim the Palmer River region as their territories, investigating oral tradition, language, ritual and marriage practices.

In these matters I can say that my Aekyom hosts displayed remarkable patience, a trait I sometimes found lacking in my own character under the conditions of more exasperating cultural adjustments. To my mind, the courtesy and generosity of these people are clearly reflected in principles of reciprocity which pervade all aspects of their lifestyle. As a result, my own behaviour was shaped and directed by this moral and social imperative. Significantly, I never paid money directly for information given to me by my informants, but engaged in various forms of "gift-giving". My "gifts" included highly coveted commercial tobacco and cigarettes, rice, tinned fish, cheese and biscuits, matches, the occasional steel axe, shotgun shells, and limited medical treament. On one occasion I contributed money towards the purchase of food supplies for a ritual gathering, while it was a regular practice to compensate my field assistant for services rendered with a cash payment, cigarettes or other goods. In return the Aekyom welcomed me into their communities.

This is a privilege which no other foreign guest may have a chance to enjoy. Viewed from the outside, there is no guarantee that Aekyom values, beliefs, institutions and modes of thought will be granted the recognition and respect which in my opinion they deserve. This is unquestionably more problematic today than it was 30 years ago when Europeans began a limited but systematic campaign of active intervention in their way of life. Recently, the Ok Tedi Mining Project has set in motion social and cultural changes of an unprecedented rate and scope. Under the impact of the project the Aekyom are increasingly exposed to unfamiliar cultures from elsewhere in Papua New Guinea and frequently to the seductive complexities of the modern world, both material and social.

These processes, while beneficial in some respects, also tend to accentuate issues and problems of ethnic pluralism, acculturation and assimilation. There is, therefore, an immediate need for informed and sympathetic dialogue across cultural boundaries. The present thesis is intended as a modest contribution to this discussion.

Practically speaking, there is a seemingly infinite number and variety of subjects that could be addressed in pursuit of this end. One could, for example, concentrate on ethnic identity, ecology, economic systems, socio-cultural change, religious beliefs, values and practices and other issues. However, these subjects are far too broad to be considered within the compass of a single thesis. Thus it is necessary to isolate a topic that may serve as an integrative focus for a much wider range of concerns. As a result, this thesis is primarily concerned with the issues of descent and group formation among the Aekyom of the Fly River region.

The importance of this theme for an ethnographic appreciation of the Aekyom is introduced in the first chapter. Here a theoretical and methodological discussion of the relevant conceptual issues provides a basis for comparing and contrasting alternative definitions of descent and principles of group formation in New Guinea. First, the main principles of conventional descent theory as developed and refined by Fortes and Scheffler are presented and then criticized on logical and empirical grounds. This dicussion then leads to an outline of a broader definition of descent which:

(i) redirects attention to the significance of certain kinship forms and the dialectical character of principles of exchange and reciprocity for individual and group identity in New Guinea; and

(ii) highlights several substantive issues that are not usually taken into account by ethnographic studies of descent as an organizing principle in society and culture.

In Chapter 2 a descriptive account of the ethnographic setting focuses on the general features of Aekyom society and culture and

examines their status within the Ok Tedi Area as a whole.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of aspects of social organization. With a focus on the Aekyom hamlet it seeks to describe the principles of local group formation and in the process identifies a number of units that are conceptually salient or culturally recognized by the Aekyom at this level of social organization. Particular attention is devoted to the relationship between rights in property and the nature of the groups that are formed in terms of these rights. At the same time the relevance of names and hamlet territories for agnatic group identity are introduced as underlying structural and symbolic themes.

The fourth chapter consists of a comprehensive description and analysis of Aekyom kinship and marriage. Beginning with an Areal problematic that links the issue of group names to alternative definitions of kinship and descent the discussion proceeds to examine its implications for the Aekyom case. As a first step, the social classification is analysed from a formal perspective which reveals a fundamental structural ambiguity. The formal "inconsistencies" in the relationship terminology are then reconsidered in the light of various semantic and metaphorical features of the relationship terms as well as the system of social attitudes. It is argued that the social classification reflects a concern with the themes of renewal and rebirth which are repeated and elaborated along social, cultural and religious dimensions and structured in terms of an underlying dialectical logic. These issues are then brought to bear on the forms, functions and meaning of Aekyom marriage. The historical, statistical and ritual aspects of symmetrical and asymmetrical forms of marriage exchange are viewed from sociological and religious perspectives and then related to a wider discussion concerning the cultural and spiritual prerequisites for the reproduction of named groups. The linguistic and symbolic importance of named groups are then traced to Lévi-Strauss' notion of the "culinary triangle" which in the Aekyom context serves as a metaphor for group structure and definitions of descent.

Chapter 5 provides a more focussed discussion of names and naming as a structural theme relevant to the status and definition of descent and group formation in Aekyom society. Through an investigation of group, territorial and personal names, certain basic structural ambiguities are identified and then explained in terms of a dialectical opposition between agnatic and non-agnatic factors, including matrilateral and affinal relationships, which is central to the reproduction of and membership in a named group. On the basis of this argument it is concluded that 'descent' in Aekyom thought and society is a dialectical category and process. This distinction is then related to Aekyom forms of marriage which are viewed as complementary structural mechanisms for the religious and cultural articulation of descent categories and named social groups.

The main purpose of Chapter 6 is to place the arguments and conclusions of previous chapters in an interpretative framework that, at least initially, is a theoretical construction of Aekyom thought itself. Therefore, the chapter examines the nature of myth and the manner of its reflection on issues pertaining to group categories, configurations and representations. Informed by various theoretical developments in the study of myth and symbolism, a position is taken that defines myth as a key vision on the human condition. As a result, Aekyom mythology is seen to provide a forum where the issue of descent and its implications for the status of agnatic groups and other (potential) social arrangements may be discussed and debated.

In the seventh and final chapter the main arguments of the thesis are re-presented in the context of a discussion on alternative models for the conceptualization of social structures in New Guinea. It is concluded, at least for the Aekyom case, that an integration and synthesis of "descent" and "alliance" criteria are necessary in order to reveal the dialectical nature of the Aekyom social, cultural and religious order.

CHAPTER 1. THE ETHNOGRAPHIC PROBLEM

Introduction

Over the past two decades anthropological interest in the nature of social categories and groups has become increasingly focussed on the issue of descent. As an ethnographic category, 'descent' may be and often is taken for granted in the conduct of research. However, critical recognition that the nature of descent may raise certain problems for ethnographic description and analysis has led to a re-examination of both the substantive aspects of the topic as well as the appropriateness of dealing with the complexities of descent within more conventional theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Central to the concerns expressed here is an ethnographically and theoretically adequate definition of 'descent' and the nature of its relationship to social categories and groups. As a matter of orthodoxy, conceptualizations of descent have generally proceeded from certain sociological assumptions that have their historical roots in the works of Durkheim and Mauss, Morgan, and Rivers (Barnard and Good, 1984:68-69; Goldman, 1976:287; Verdon, 1980:129-130). In contemporary terms, these assumptions have developed into several important issues which have shaped anthropological thinking about descent and descent configurations and drawn attention to their implications for social and cultural organization. As guidelines for research, then, they suggest a number of significant areas that should be addressed in an ethnographic study of descent. Specifically, these include the following considerations:

(i) the form and content of aboriginal ancestries;

(ii) the role of descent in the structural differentiation of social categories and groups;

(iii) the relationship between descent and principles of kinship in the definition, formation and composition of groups; and

(iv) the role of descent in the structuring of social relations between individuals and between groups.

While these issues provide an important focus for ethnographic investigation, they have also been the subject of alternative and controversial conceptualizations of descent and descent categories or groups, and more generally, of models of man and society. Insofar as these differences involve disagreements of a theoretical and methodological order they have an important bearing on the directions followed in this thesis and, therefore, merit careful consideration.

The Sociology of Descent: Point and Counterpoint

There is little question that the views of Meyer Fortes dominate discussions of the sociology of descent. For Fortes, the concepts of 'descent' and 'descent group' are phrased in terms of a model of society which postulates the primacy of corporate, unilineal groups within a domain of political-jural relationships. Central to his definitional framework are the ideas of genealogical and social scale which serve to distinguish the concepts of 'descent' from the related concept of 'filiation' as well as identify social groups within different societal domains. As an element of social structure, 'filiation' refers to small-scale genealogies which link a child to his/her parents within the domestic sphere of kinship or interpersonal relations. Large-scale genealogies, on the other hand, imply "kinship" ancestries or pre-parental antecedents. Therefore, it is at the level of common ancestry that Fortes formulates his definition of 'descent' but with the added proviso that it represents a politically and jurally significant social relation. Thus, either at the level of categories or groups, politics and the distribution of rights and obligations are seen by Fortes as fundamental to the articulation of discrete configurations whose constituent genealogical relationships provide the basis for descent group membership and define the parameters for legal entitlement to a status.

On theoretical grounds Fortes also argues that only unilineally-constituted groups should be described as descent groups. This

conclusion follows from certain other theoretical suppositions about the nature of descent groups. Sociologically, a criterion of descent in Fortes' view effects group closure through the establishment of recognized boundaries. Thus, as a set of persons, descent groups admit no ambiguity vis-à-vis individual membership or claims to descent (i.e., jural) statuses. Therefore, it follows that descent groups are mutually exclusive entities.

While Fortes' conceptualization of the differences between 'descent' and 'filiation' seem useful where legal distinctions between lineality, inheritance and succession are involved (e.g., Scheffler, 1985:7-8), his general conclusions regarding the nature of descent as an organizing principle in society and culture are less compelling. Goldman, for example, has raised serious doubts about the logical consistency and empirical adequacy of an essentially jural conception of descent. He notes perceptively that,

> Since jural concepts rest upon still more fundamental principles governing human relationships, this definition is not very helpful. It is little more than a tautological endpiece to a preconceived theory of kinship and descent as a network of jural relationships (Goldman, 1977:175).

No less disconcerting, at least in Goldman's view, is the unnecessary separation of kinship from descent as analytical categories. More importantly, the bifurcation of reality which this methodological strategy effects is accomplished within narrow sets of sociological assumptions about the nature of native realities. As a result, such a procedure may impede further inquiry into the nature of descent which may very well presuppose a wider context of qualitatively different realities that may be understood not as mutually exclusive categories but in terms of a "dialectic of interdependence". Elaborating on these points, Goldman argues that,

> For the most part, social anthropology has followed the theoretical directions set by Durkheim and Mauss in postulating the social order itself as the primary reality ... [But] while much thought has been given to the logic of organization and to the functioning of descent groups, questions one might ask about descent as a primary organizing principle of kinship societies

> have gone largely unexplored (Goldman, 1976:287; 1977:175; see also Goldman, 1975:207-208).

If a jural concept misleadingly restricts a definition of descent to unambiguous realities, then it is conceivable that descent groups themselves may be characterized by ambiguous properties. This possibility was recognized by Firth in his studies of Oceanic society and later re-emphasized as a methodological observation by other anthropologists. For example, Barnard and Good (1984:77) stress that:

> The very concept of "group membership" may itself be emically problematic. As Firth (1963:36) has suggested, there will not always be a clear-cut "full, exclusive, and unitary set of rights and obligations", but rather "a considerable degree of permitted ambiguity" in determining who is a member of a unilineal or cogantic "corporate" group. These [and similar] ambiguities should of course be investigated.

It seems highly fitting then that as a culture area in Oceania, New Guinea should be of particular ethnographic and theoretical value vis-à-vis the issues that inform discussions of descent, group structure and principles of socio-cultural organization.

Approaches to Group Formation and Descent in New Guinea: A General Overview

In 1962, an important paper by J.A. Barnes highlighted a range of problems encountered in the study of New Guinea social formations and in particular those found in the Highlands. For the most part, these problems concerned the extent to which the principles of social structure and descent derived from African ethnography could be used to understand the contours and nuances of social configurations in New Guinea societies. At issue, as Scheffler (1985:2-3) notes, was a theoretically and ethnographically adequate definition of groups and group formation in both New Guinea and Africa.

Significantly, a common focus on descent groups drew attention to some interesting parallels between New Guinea and Africa. In general, Highlands societies seemed to reflect polysegmentary systems of

patrilineal descent groups. However, a number of Highlands ethnographers suggested that these similarities were largely superficial. While retaining the descriptive terms 'patrilineal', 'descent group', 'lineage', 'clan', etc., they went on to show how the actual disposition of groups on the ground conflicted with normative statements about the nature and primacy of descent groups. For example, non-genealogical factors such as residence patterns, economic co-operation, political associations or ties of a consubstantial or spiritual nature seemed to be more important principles for the structuring of groups and social relations or the determination of group membership than genealogical relationships phrased in patrilineal terms. Indeed, it appeared that claims to genealogical connections to significant others were often fictionalized so that the integrity of the group could be brought into line with the prevailing economic or political practice. Therefore, as the discrepancies between indigenous models of descent (in their genealogical forms) and the empirical arrangement of group relations become more pronounced, it became increasingly difficult to articulate definitions of groups or specify the nature of group formation and membership directly in terms of particular descent values (e.g., patrilineal). As a result of these discrepancies, the situation in the Highlands drew attention to an apparently unique set of constraints on the definition and formation of groups in New Guinea communities. But while Highlands societies were seen as significantly different from acephalous (and other) African societies, differences at the level of group structure were "resolved" by a common "descent terminology" applicable to New Guinea and Africa. Yet this state of affairs seemed far from satisfactory. On the one hand, a question was raised concerning the appropriateness of applying African models of descent and social structure to the New Guinea ethnography. More seriously, the status of descent theory itself as a cross-culturally valid formulation was placed in doubt. Thus, with a focus squarely on the New Guinea ethnography, a most important issue was raised: (i) either the New Guinea ethnography reflected negatively on descent theory, particularly as formulated by Fortes, and, therefore, required alternative theoretical orientations in order to come to grips with the nature of descent, kinship and group structure in this part of the world; or (ii) the conventional wisdom could be reconciled with apparently indigestible facts through a careful reconsideration of its main principles.

To date, the most thorough reconsideration of descent theory in this context is Scheffler (1985). According to Scheffler, the first

requirement for an understanding of the nature of the relation between descent theory and the New Guinea "facts" is a clear view of the conceptual distinctions 'descent' and 'filiation'. For each of these has an important bearing on the conditions and circumstances of group affiliation as well as significant implications for the status of "descent groups" in New Guinea. Although Scheffler endorses Fortes' original distinction between descent and filiation, he does so with a view to its refinement, development and re-organization in the context of the New Guinea ethnography. Scheffler's main argument is that, with respect to principles of group affiliation, the New Guinea data generally conform to a simple and coherent pattern. He notes first of all that groups in the Highlands are first and foremost local groups associated with specific territories as geographically-bounded entities. But despite this fact, these groups are not "purely" local groups for two reasons. First, local communities consist of exogamous collectivities which may be distinguished from one another on the basis of specific names. And second, members of a local community may exercise residential options that imply neither the extinguishment of individual membership in a natal group nor exclusive membership in the current group (e.g., other than a natal group) with which an individual is co-resident.

At issue then is how individuals are recruited to membership in a local group or under what conditions an individual assumes a status. Scheffler argues that in most Highlands societies, patrifiliation or the fact of being the offspring of a male member of the local group is the genealogical sufficient condition for group affliation. This distinction, according to Scheffler, should be contrasted to those cases (e.g., recorded for some African societies) where patrifiliation is a necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion in a group (see also Barnes, 1962). The latter, as patrilineally constituted groups, are defined as descent groups proper since their members share common agnatic descent in Fortes' sense. Thus members assume a patrilineal status within the network of legal rights and obligations specific to the descent group. However, Scheffler argues that in most Highlands societies, rather than finding patrlineal descent groups we are confronted with a mosaic of paternal or agnatic kinship at the level of the local group. In this context, 'patrifiliation' rather than 'descent' is the jurally significant relation vis-à-vis rules of group affiliation. Therefore, individuals who become assimilated to the local group do not enjoy patrilineal status while the group so formed (on principles of patrifiliation and "infiltration from

the outside") cannot be described as a patrilineal descent group, or, for that matter, be an empirical instance of a descent category.

For Scheffler then, group formation in the Highlands involves a process wherein a particular rule of filiation rather than a rule of descent is the critical theoretical element. While his article does not discuss the situation in the Lowlands, the argument may, in principle, be extended to these areas of New Guinea where conditions of named, territorially-based groups and issues of "unilineal descent", "patrilineal flexibility", "loose structures" or "bilateral kinship principles" as features of group structure and relations are common (e.g., Pouwer, 1960; Van Der Leeden, 1960). Consequently, it would also be subject to the test of a wider range of data which in certain substantive areas relevant to the present topic are more complete than those from the Highlands.

There seems to be little doubt that, logically, Scheffler's argument is tidy. But it is so within very narrow and preconceived terms of reference. As Goldman (see above) suggests, there is no a priori reason why jurally-relevant genealogical connections rather than other types of relationships should constitute a privileged focus for theoretical discussions on the nature of descent in New Guinea or other parts of the "primitive" world. In this context, Scheffler is largely inattentive to the wider range of cultural items that have an important bearing on issues of descent and group formation in New Guinea. For example, while names seem important for personal and group identity (Scheffler, 1985:12,15) the structural significance of names and naming for the issues at hand is neither queried nor addressed. Similarly, Scheffler fails to acknowledge those cultural idioms employed by New Guinea societies that provide wider scope and greater depth to the origin and context of ancestries. A related and serious omission is any reference to the religious and mythical dimensions of ancestries. It is also striking that, like Fortes before him, Scheffler is unprepared or unwilling to tolerate ambiguity as a structurally significant property or principle of organization. Thus, rather than explore the ramifications of structural ambiguity at various cultural and social levels, Scheffler is more inclined to dismiss it as an artifact of demographic circumstances and/or ties of kinship (cf. Van Der Leeden, 1960:123,127).

In addition to these substantive aspects of the problem, Scheffler ignores an important theoretical literature in which alternative ideas and

approaches have been developed in order to address the issues. Verdon (1980) provides an interesting summary and criticism of some of the models that may be abstracted from this literature. Yet his own approach to the nature of descent labours under the illusion that 'descent': (i) must be conceptualized exclusively in hierarchical or vertical terms; and (ii) must refer to something tangible such as the aggregation of groups at successive levels of social, economic, political or kinship organization. Thus Verdon, along with some other anthropologists, does not fully consider the most distinctive features of New Guinea, as a social and culture area, for theories of descent. To anticipate later chapters, especially noteworthy in both lowland and mountain societies is the conceptual representation of society or ancestries in horizontal terms, or more specifically, in terms of cross-sex sibling, cross-cousin, and affinal relationships (e.g., Burridge, 1969; Gell, 1975; Pouwer, 1964). These details do not so much pre-empt the recognition of descent as a vertical construct as draw, say, principles of patrifiliation or agnation into a wider context of interaction at the level of group structural relations which makes descent a reality. These features are, in turn, firmly grounded in principles of exchange, reciprocity and the reproduction of groups and group relations, all of which are characterized by deep religious and metaphysical assumptions.

As far as the ethnographic literature on New Guinea is concerned, these principles have been most clearly articulated by Bateson (1958) and Wagner (1967). Each author, and in his own way, has promoted the general idea that group and individual identities are subject to a kind of "negotiation" according to various institutions and levels of social and ritual association. In both works one can discern a "dialectic of interdpendence" in the process of identity formation which may be expressed as a principle of differentiation via reciprocal action (Bateson, 1958) or the asymmetrical completion and definition of identity through ritual exchange (Wagner, 1967). Less attention, however, has been devoted to the religious and metaphysical assumptions underlying these processes and their implications, as symbolic themes, for the nature of descent, group structure and interrelations.

Viewed from a related but slightly different angle, this gap in the general theoretical literature has been a major pre-occupation of Irving Goldman. For Goldman, the main task has been to articulate a theoretical appreciation of descent which is not alien to native sensibilities and

understandings. Towards this end, he suggests that we view descent in more comprehensive terms: that is, not simply in terms of its social functions, but as a religious and metaphysical vision of the world in which human beings live and reproduce. Thus, as a theoretical and ethnographic conception, 'descent' is tantamount to an interpretation of indigenous theories of the generation of life,

> ... a theory about the emergence and growth of generations, about the continuity and stability of natural forms, about the unity of and differentiation of [ontological] forms and about the factors that promote human vigour and durability (Goldman, 1977:176).

This perspective on descent and the formation of groups promises new possibilities for a theoretical understanding of kinship-based societies and creates a forum for the integration of "modes of social organization and modes of ontological conceptualization". More specifically, it raises critical questions concerning the range of cultural, natural and supernatural forms necessary to the human condition and its perpetuation, the conditions, circumstances and nature of their interaction and the structural consequences of that interaction.

At issue in this thesis, then, is whether descent and group formation among the Aekyom can be representated by a single or by multiple principles of organization. Accepting a broad definition of descent in cultural, natural and supernatural terms, it tries to show how group categories, configurations and representations in Aekyom society conform to or reflect varying expressions of an indigenous theory of descent. It is then argued that these cohere according to a central dialectical principle of organization whose relevance is focussed on but not limited to issues of group structure, identity and (reciprocal) exchange. As a result, this ethnographic study also has a bearing on a wider range of subjects, including social classification, kinship and social organization, marriage, ritual, nomination, totemism and myth.

CHAPTER 2. THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

Introduction

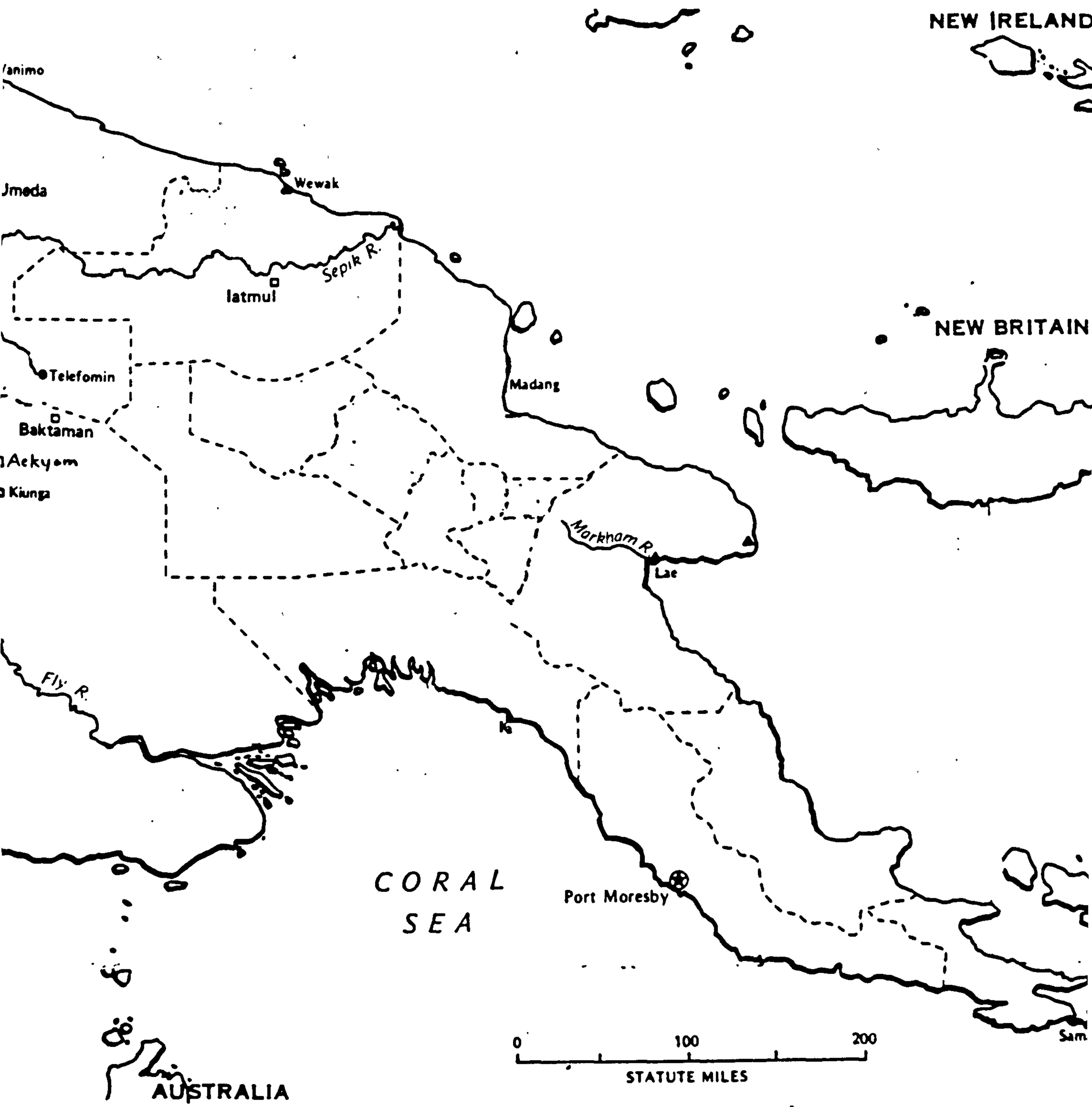
The purpose of this chapter is to locate the Aekyom on the ethnographic map. First, the indigenous population is described in terms of its geographical location. Then, particular and general distinctions of a linguistic, ethnic and historical nature are drawn in order to outline the position of the Aekyom within a wider framework of regional cultural traits and interrelations. This is followed by a description of the field setting. The administration of the area is examined with reference to its impact on Aekyom settlement patterns, political organization and economic development while regional historical events are detailed in order to provide a more complete background to the Aekyom ethnography. Next, a brief comment is offered regarding the physical characteristics of the study population and some general impressions of Aekyom demeanor and life style are documented. The chapter concludes with a descriptive summary of the physical environment, local material culture, subsistence activities and trade relations.

Locality, Language and Ethnohistory

The Aekyom are one of many indigenous peoples who occupy the Ok Tedi Area, a particularly remote region in the interior of Papua New Guinea. In general, the population is distributed throughout the territory that lies roughly between the Fly River and its tributary, the Alice River (Ok Tedi). Both rivers take their rise in and flow south of the central mountain ranges which divide West Sepik and Western provinces. The easterly tributaries of the Fly River, including the Palmer, Black and Elevala rivers serve to further demarcate lands traditionally owned and controlled by Aekyom-speaking people.

Map 1

Papua New Guinea



The term "Aekyom" refers to a linguistic unit of some 9,000 people occupying lowland terrain to the immediate south of the central New Guinea mountain range in Western Province, Papua New Guinea. According to the most recent comparative study in New Guinea linguistics, the language belongs to the Awin-Pa Family of the Central and South New Guinea stock. This classification unites the Aekyom with their eastern Pare-speaking neighbours and clearly separates them from the Lowland and Mountain Ok language groups such as the Min, Ningerum and Yonggom located to the north, west and south-west, as well as from the Suki-speaking groups (of the Yaqay-Marind-Boazi language Family) situated to the more distant south (Wurm and Hattori, 1981:12; cf Wurm, 1971:574-577).

As a distinct language group the Aekyom population is further characterized by a number of dialectal differences which tend to be territorially specific. According to Voorhoeuve (1975:388-390) there are, perhaps, three main Aekyom dialects roughly divided into Western, North-Central, and Eastern areas. Austen (1924:10) also suggests that there are three such dialects, basing his conclusions on a brief comparative vocabularly that includes Aekyom speakers inhabiting the areas of the Alice River, Palmer River Junction and the western Donaldson Mountain Range. However, my field experience and data suggest there may be at least four main dialects, including the Fly River (Eastern), Alice River (Western), North-central and Palmer/Black rivers (north-eastern) dialect areas, as well as several fringe dialects including Minomin, Knai and perhaps (formerly) a more southern group[1] (see Barth, 1971:174, 181; Carpenter, 1971; Voorhoeuve, 1975). Although it is by no means conclusive evidence, Table 1 does illustrate some lexical and phonological differences among the suggested four main Aekyom dialect areas.

On the basis of my own fieldwork, the Aekyom themselves distinguish at least 3 dialects within their language community, which they express in terms of their own language categories: Aekyom (Alice River), Aekyom-Pare (Fly River) and Aekyom-Skai (Palmer/Black rivers). The possibility of a fourth dialect in this context exists, but it seems ambiguous: some Aekyom refer to the hypothesized North-Central dialect as "Aekyom" while

Table 1.

Hypothesized Main Akeyom Dialect Areas
As Suggested by Comparative Vocabularies

English Equivalent	Alice River	Fly River	North-Central	Palmer/ Black River
woman	ala	ala	arla	ana
bird	smire	smele	smelei	smi
pig	mine	mine	mine	mi
arrow	apine	aepine	kapune	kum
dog	psaene	psaene	psaene	biun
tree grub	psene	psene	psene	bien
marsupials	toi	tei	tei	ti
hornbill	khwire	kbilei	khwire	kbilei

others are unsure of its classification. However, despite dialectal differences, the Aekyom see their language as an indicator of shared ethnic identity and they will often say "no Aekyom swa brema" ("I known how to speak Aekyom") as a way of distinguishing their ethnicity from that of other language groups. In addition to 'Aekyom', other languages are spoken or known by Aekyom people. However, fluency in "trade languages" such as Motu or Pidgin English is limited to only a few men, while I encountered no informants in my field area who could speak or understand languages indigenous to the Area, with the possible exception of "Pare" or aspects of the Pare language.

There is not, to my knowledge, a straightforward English translation of the term "Aekyom"; nor did I encounter any Aekyom speakers who could provide commentary on its etymology. People say simply that they speak Aekyom when questioned about it.[2] The term does not appear to mean "the people" since Aekyom people have another word that readily conveys this idea, namely wíkè. However, it would appear that "Aekyom" may be broken down into smaller, meaningful segments. The prefix ae is a recurrent feature of the language and is central to a number of distinctions and categories that are discussed in greater detail in later chapters. Yom on the other hand, appears to be the root of yomkra which refers to an influential or large man. Yomkra in turn is sometimes used by Aekyom speakers to refer to a culture hero known also as Wi, WiWi or wìké ("the old man Wi"). Interestingly, Wi is said by some to have created the Aekyom people and the surrounding natural environment. However, he is not regarded by the Aekyom or neighbouring groups to be responsible for linguistic and ethnic differentiation in the Ok Tedi Area as a whole.

Although Wi may be unique to Aekyom language and culture, administrative patrol reports and my own field observations show that the Aekyom do not always regard their common language as a basis for shared ethnicity or even common feeling. In some instances, Aekyom do not hesitate to claim identity with distinct and often remote language groups, although statements about identity in this context are usually based on ethnohistorical or totemic rather than linguistic ties. At the levels of

language and speech, the Aekyom are more closely related to Pare groups than to speakers of Lowland or Mountain Ok languages. While minimal comprehension of one another's language exists between Fly River Aekyom and Pare (O'Connor, 1937/38, 1938/39), the relation between both these languages and the Ok Family of languages is one of mutual unintelligiblity (Barth, 1971:174, Welsch, 1979:2). However, ethnic boundaries grounded in language differences are cross cut by a variety of cultural ties and distinctions which address more general issues of cultural evolution and ethnohistorical contact in the Ok Tedi Area. Interestingly, Aekyom, Pare, Yonggom and Ningerum share some common features of community organization, settlement patterns, resource exploitation, material culture and ritual life which constrast with those of the Min. Yet, many Aekyom regard the Pare, for example, as more socially, ethnically and historically distant than the Min inhabitants of the northern mountains. These themes are particularly evident in Aekyom oral tradition.

Along the northern fringe of Aekyom settlements, social ties were traditionally established with the Min and maintained on the basis of trade and intermarriage. As a result, diffusion, assimilation and/or integration of material culture, dress and language are common (Barth, 1971, Carpenter, 1971/72). These ties are supported and promoted by family and "clan" histories of migration from Min territories, the adoption of "clan" or group names that are of Mountain Ok origin and contemporary claims by some Aekyom to Min ancestry or ethnicity (cf. Barth, 1971:182). Such claims, however, are not limited to marginal or fringe-dwelling Aekyom groups. They are also made among Aekyom groups in southern, western and eastern parts of Aekyom territory. In these areas, ethnic or group identities may be traced through ethnohistorical narratives and myth to ancestral totemic or parental figures in Yonggom and Min territories. However, I never recorded, for this same Aekyom population, any claims to origins in Pare territory despite the fact that the Aekyom traditionally traded and, among the more eastern Aekyom, intermarried with Pare groups. Nor do Aekyom trace, to my knowledge, origins or migrations from areas farther south, south-west or south-east of the Aekyom region.

These observations, therefore, seem to be consistent with a migration pattern, more general than initially proposed by Barth (1971:184), in which people have moved eastward and southward in the Ok Tedi Area[3] (cf. Herdt, 1984:48-54). They also draw attention to the importance of ecological constraints on the development of cultural forms in the area as a whole and of the processes and circumstances in terms of which ethnic identities become differentiated or united (Barth, 1971: 184, 188). While it seems obvious that a regional comparison along these dimensions would benefit the investigation of a particular culture in the Ok Tedi Area, this task cannot be pursued here. Not only is the available data insufficient, it is simply beyond the scope of this thesis which is to describe and analyze the integration of cultural configurations peculiar to the Aekyom.

I have perhaps said enough at this point about language, ethnicity and ethnohistory to help characterize the location of my major field site. Most of the information on which this research is based was carried out among the inhabitants of Drimgas village, situated on the west bank of the Fly River approximately 40 miles upriver from the administrative centre of Kiunga. Thus, I worked mainly with speakers of the Fly River dialect who I will call the Fly River Aekyom. Comparative and supplementary field data were obtained from neighbouring and more distant villages throughout the remaining Aekyom dialect areas.

It should be stated at the outset that villages which the Aekyom call by the Motuan term <u>hanua</u> are not a traditional feature of Aekyom settlement patterns or community organization. Rather, they have their origin and context in indigenous population movements, encouraged mainly by administrative policy and economic developments in the Ok Tedi Area. As the impact of Europeans has had variable effects on the Aekyom way of life, it will be necessary to provide in some detail the contact and administrative history of the area. This is also necessary for two other reasons: (1) the form in which some demographic statistics are presented are administratively based; and (2) the study of traditional indigenous beliefs, thought and institutions required a field site least influenced by

European-induced changes.

Demography and Contemporary Political Organization

Today, the Aekyom poulation is distributed throughout four census divisions created by the previous Australian colonial administration and retained by the present provincial government (see Map 2). Drimgas is one of 14 villages which are currently located in the East Awin[2] census division of the North Fly District, Western Province. The remaining 56 Aekyom villages are distributed throughout the North, South and West Awin census divisions which complete the Aekyom census area. According to the 1980 census figures compiled by the Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga, Aekyom-speakers number 9,262 for all Awin census divisions. In East Awin (not including Kiunga and its immediate environs) the population total for Aekyom speakers was 1,737, while Drimgas registerd 176. The population of Drimgas in 1981-82 was 224. However, this figure is approximate since many East Awin village populations such as Drimgas are marked by minimal in and out migration. The main reasons for this movement is the establishment of "suburbs", known locally as "corners", around the administrative centre of Kiunga. Like a number of other Aekyom villages in the various Awin census divisions, Drimgas has its "corner" which accommodates temporary and more permanent village residents. Thus, for some Aekyom, there is a continuous movement between Drimgas village and Drimgas "corner". Yet, the majority of the population — 188, or 84% — perfer to reside in Drimgas village and live the life that is their heritage. As Table 2 shows, the amalgamated population of Drimgas has not changed significantly since the early 1970s. The 1950s census data for Drimgas reflects the gradual transition from traditional hamlet settlement patterns — including hamlet fission — to nucleated villages paralleling pacification and political consolidation in the area by the Australian colonial administration (but see below).

Judging by patrol reports, census data and the estimated area of land exploited by the indigenous population, population density appears to

MAP 2.

Census Divisions

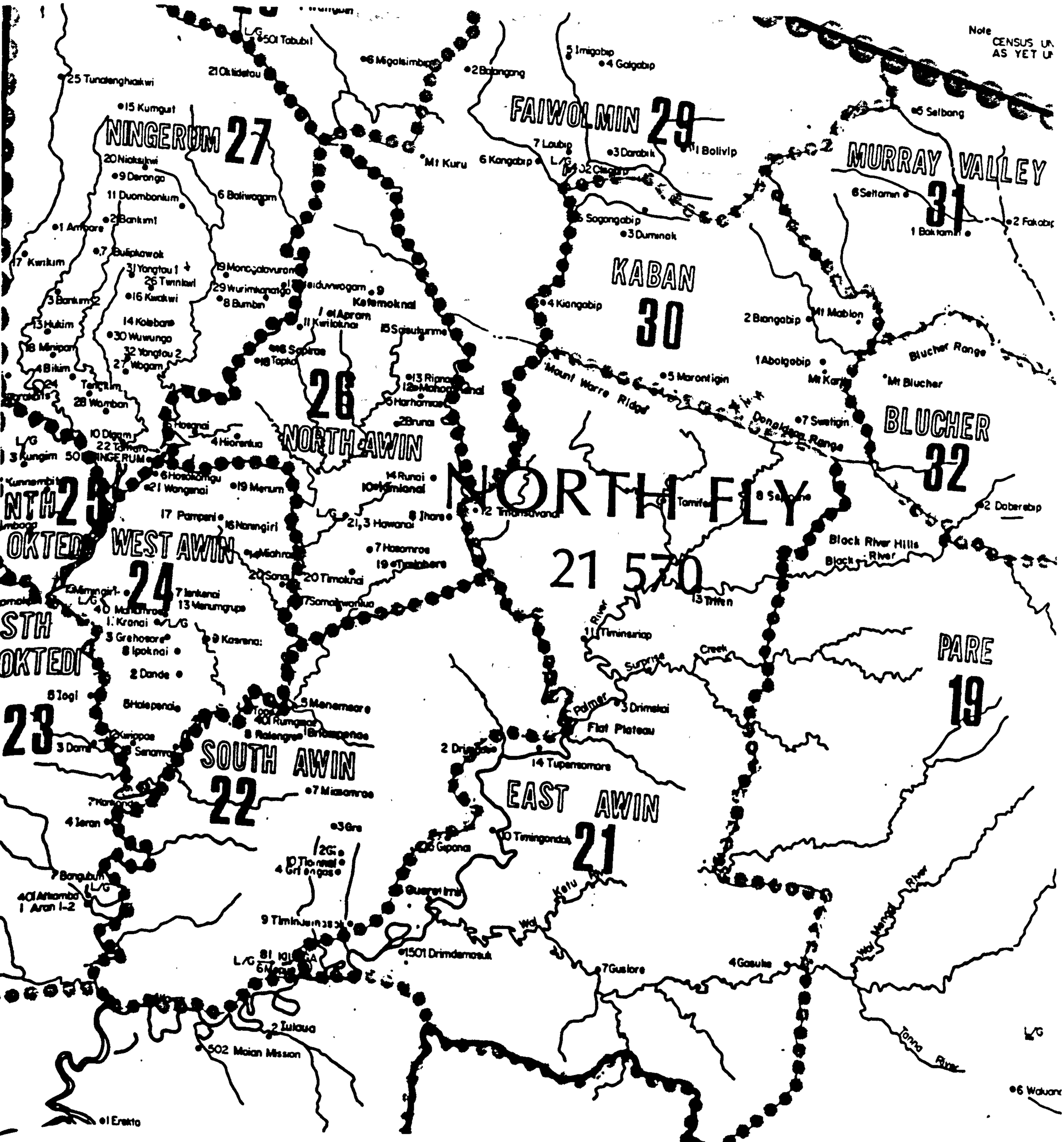


Table 2.

Historical Census of Drimgas Population*

Year	Child M	Child F	Adult M	Adult F	Absentees M	Absentees F	Other	Total
1952	4	2	14	5				25
1954	(Hamlet abandoned. Population split into 3 groups. Possibly retired to sago garden shelters and/or houses.)							
1956	19	11	15	20				76
1972	32	49	62	40	1			184
1975	38	45	57	45				186
1980	(92 males, 84 females)							
1982	44	39	46	51			44	224

*Source: Patrol Reports, Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga; fieldnotes. The 1950s census data do not state the age criterion dividing child from adult. The 1970s census data are based on the criterion of 18 yrs. of age or over for adult status, and estimated ages of the residents. In 1980, only the criterion of sex was used in compiling the census figures. The 1982 census data based on fieldwork are to be interpreted as follows: child (a) male: under 18 yrs. of age (estimated) and unmarried; (b) female: under 14 yrs. of age (estimated) and unmarried; adult: (a) male: 18 yrs. of age or over (estimated) and married, (b) female: married (i) 10 (20%) under 18 yrs. of age (estimated) (ii) 41 (80%) over 18 yrs. of age (estimated); other: (a) bachelors: 18 yrs. of age or over (estimated): 22 (i) 12 (55%) initiated (ii) 10 (45%) uninitiated; (b) nubile girls: 14 yrs. of age or over (estimted): 12; (c) widowers: 3; (d) widows: 8.

vary considerably among the Aekyom. The highest (estimated) density — 3.8 persons /km^2 — is recorded for the Alice River Aekyom (West Awin census division) and the lowest (estimated) density — 1 person/km^2 — for the Fly River Aekyom (East Awin census division). Table 3 shows the population densities of all Aekyom census divisions which only roughly correspond to the main dialect areas.

These figures are fairly consistent with those reported by Welsch (1979:14) for census divisions among the neighbouring Ningerum. Together, with the Ningerum data, population densities for the Aekyom show a general trend of lower population densities as one moves from west to east, and from south to north in the Ok Tedi Area. They also reflect to some extent in the lowlands differences in traditional settlement patterns: to the north and west one tends to find individual, dispersed houses (e.g., Ningerum, northern and western Yonggom) while to the south and east communal hamlets is the general pattern, especially for the Aekyom (Austin, 1923; Welsch, 1979:5; cf. Knauft, 1985:321).

All Aekyom census divisions are administered from Kiunga, the largest settlement in the North Fly District with a population now exceeding 3,000. While many of its "corner" inhabitants are indigenous to the Ok Tedi Area, it is in reality a mosaic of ethnic groups from across Papua New Guinea that includes Highlanders and Tolais as well as expatriots and foreigners, including Australians, New Zealanders, Britons, Americans and French Canadians.[4]

Each village in the Awin census divisions is represented by a councillor who is elected to office every three years at the village level. There may also be one or two committee men elected by each village every three years who assist and support the village councillor.[5] Village councillors meet every one or two months in Kiunga at the Kiunga Local Government Council (KLGC), established in 1964, where they discuss potential and existing development projects, community improvement programs and the status of village rules, their infractions, and general complaints. The latter are often directed towards the provincial

Table 3.

Estimated Aekyom Population Densities*

Census Division	Population Total	Estimated Area Exploited	Estimated Population Density
East Awin	1,737	1,786	1/km^2
West Awin	2,719	715	3.8/km^2
South Awin	2,472	1,087	2.3/km^2
North Awin	2,334	2,205	1.1/km^2
		Mean density:	2.1/km^2

* Source: Patrol Reports, 1980 Census, Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga.

government in Daru, located on a small island off the Papuan coast some 600 miles downriver, for its failure to meet the economic expectations of local Aekyom villagers.

Usually, various proposals are discussed and drawn up in the KLGC, and then submitted to the Assistant District Commissioner for ratification. According to my informants, the latter is infrequently forthcoming. This seems to be related to variations in local understanding of the purpose and functions of the KLGC which are often reflected in the influence, articulateness and responsibilities of each village councillor. But in general — and in particular among the residents of East Awin — the KLGC is seen by villagers as either a supplier of goods and services in exchange for taxes paid[6] or, more often, as dissociated from local people and their needs, since the "expected" goods and services are rarely if ever supplied through this channel. This perception is reinforced by the presence of political factions within the KLGC and its inability to coordinate local and regional concerns. Significantly, no "big men" of the Highlands type (see Strathern, 1971) are found in this "citizens' forum" or at the level of village politics to facilitate such coordinated action. Temporary alliances among factions do sometimes occur to form a common front vis-à-vis problems that are perceived to originate with an indifferent provincial government. However, alliances soon dissipate, although the complaints that underpin their formation are often valid. It seems clear then that traditionally, political centralization is not a feature of the Aekyom way of life.

Indeed, many of the difficulties facing the current administration's efforts to consolidate its political influence among the Aekyom may be traced to the acephalous and relatively autonomous character of Aekyom social and political life prior to European contact as well as, or in combination with, the irregular presence of administrative representatives in Aekyom territory. Therefore, it is to the history of European or foreign contact and administration in the area that I now turn.

Contact and Administrative History

The first (unrecorded) non-indigenous people to penetrate the Aekyom region appear to have been Malay and Dutch[7] bird of paradise hunters/traders, known as worin tianai ("owners of the birds of paradise") by the Fly River Aekyom. According to my informants, these "visitors" contacted settlements as far east as present day Drimdemesuk, located on the east bank of the Fly River, about 20 miles south of Drimgas, and as far north as Tmansawenai, near the foothils of the Victor Emmanuel Mountain Range. The nature of contact seems to have varied. In some cases, relations between local Aekyom and the worin tianai were friendly. Under these circumstance, the traders would build temporary camps near Aekyom hamlets (see Chapter 3 for details regarding hamlet settlement) and stay for a day or so to trade matches, soap, fish hooks and steel axes (cf. Austin, 1923) for bird of paradise plumes. Once the trade was completed, the visitors broke camp and moved to another Aekyom hamlet to continue trading. But in a few instances, relations were less than congenial. According to my informants, prior to the 1930s some Dutch bird of paradise traders were killed and eaten by the Aekyom near Drimdemesuk, for reasons unspecified or unknown.

In general, these encounters seem to have had little impact on the Aekyom way of life, although they did expand Aekyom trade relations beyond networks established with neighbouring Min, Ningerum, Yonggom and Pare. Nevertheless, they were short lived.

The first recorded visit by a European was that of the naturalist/explorer Luigi D'Albertis, who in the year 1876 ascended the Fly and Palmer rivers, perhaps as far north as Thompson's Junction where the Palmer River meets the Mungi River near present day Tamipen and Tripen villages, East Awin. During the course of his expedition, D'Albertis inspected a number of "deserted" Aekyom dwellings, and occasionally left gifts of glass bottles and beads, steel knives, mirrors, fish hooks and calico in them. These gifts were not reciprocated — at least not peacefully — as D'Albertis also showed little regard for local people. Judging by his

writings (D'Albertis, 1881) diplomacy was based on fire power rather than more peaceful exchanges.

D'Albertis's "bellicose"adventure was followed in 1898 by Sir William Macgregor's exploration of the Fly and Palmer rivers, to a point some 610 miles from the mouth of the Fly and in plain view of Mt. Donaldson and Mt. Blucher to the north. As the administrator of British New Guinea, Macgregor attempted to establish friendly relations with the local population and it appears his visit was far more pacific than D'Albertis'. Nevertheless, Macgregor too encountered some local hostility when a Malay crewman, for an unspecified reason, was shot by an Aekyom bowman at Lario Bank south of Macrossan Island near Drimgas.

It was not until 1914 that Europeans returned to the upper reaches of the Fly River. The first of these was Sir Rupert Clarke, who headed a prospecting crew. Clarke was followed some years later by Sir Hubert Murray, the well-known territorial administrator. However, few details or highlights of their journeys through Aekyom territory were recorded or published. By 1922, administrative interest in the Ok Tedi Area had increased. Leo Austen, a colonial government officer based in Daru, led a number of extended patrols along the Alice River. On his first patrol he learned from the Yonggom, living on the west bank of the Alice, the name of the people living on the east bank and beyond: they were called Awin, or Awinkaruk by the Yonggom. During this patrol, Austen compiled some useful notes on these unfamiliar Awins, some of which were later published (Austen, 1922, 1923). Later in 1924 Austen and Thompson penetrated the heart of Fly River Aekyom (or "Awin") territory, the former proceeding about 605 miles up the Fly River and the latter investigating the remote Tully River area. While it is not entirely clear from the record, the relationship between these administrative officials and local Aekyom seem to have been cordial, although the evidence also suggests the Aekyom "kept their distance". More importantly, the more extensive administrative patrols served to acquaint the Aekyom with the friendly intentions of the European colonial administration and prepare them for a succession of encounters that would progressively impact on their way of life.

During the periods 1926/27 and 1928, Karius and Champion attempted to cross the island of New Guinea via the Fly and Sepik rivers (succeeding in 1928). While negotiating the Upper Fly River, they had occasion to engage in trade with some Aekyom men who, it seems, had been drawn from the interior to the river by the expedition's camp sites. Here the adventurers traded steel tools for sago and "hired" a number of Aekyom men as carriers. In addition, Champion recorded some brief notes on Aekyom house architecture and material culture as a result of observations conducted in a few hamlets. These were eventually published by Champion (1931). Yet Aekyom society and culture remained virtually unknown; and an official but brief administrative patrol into East Awin by F.A. Bensted in 1933 added precious little to the ethnographic record.

Industrial rather than ethnographic or administrative interests stimulated further exploration of the Aekyom region during the mid-1930s. By 1934, the Oroville Gold Dredging Company had established a base camp along the Fly River to the immediate north of Kiunga. From here they conducted a number of geological surveys along the upper Fly and into the mountainous Telefolmin region. As it turned out, they had chosen the wrong river, since it was the Alice, not the Fly, that provided a direct route to the gold reserves of Mt. Fubilan, high in the Star Mountains. However, the industrial spirit in the region was not dampened by this setback. In 1936 Kiunga became a base for Autralia Petroleum Company (APC) oil exploration which extended into North Awin census division. While some Aekyom men benefited from the oil company's policy of hiring local carriers, company prospects of fortunes in oil in the Aekyom region turned out to be slimmer than those of the mining magnates. The year 1936 also saw the introduction of the Archbold Biological Expedition to the upper Fly River. While they were primarily concerned with botanical and ornithological specimens, members of the research team paused to trade commercial beads and steel knives with the Aekyom in exchange for items of local material culture which included bows, arrows, armguards and miscellaneous ornaments.

Between 1937 and 1939, D.M. O'Connor conducted two administrative

patrols via Daru and Kiunga police camp into the previously unexplored Elevala River region, travelling as far east as the Strickland River. However, these patrols seem to have had little effect on the Aekyom population since their purpose was to investigate the unknown Pare speakers, and to a lesser extent provide some comparative information on Pare and Aekyom cultures. Ten years later, Clancy led an APC research team on yet another geological survey, but this time into the Aekyom region bounded by the Black, Palmer and Strickland rivers. Regrettably, relations with the Aekyom were initially hostile, as a volley of arrows whistled across the bow of the survey boat as it approached the Palmer/Black river junction. However, it appears that friendly relations were soon established, followed by a substantial trade of local sago and bird of paradise plumes for calico, razor blades, cut-out oil drums, steel knives and axes, rice and instructions on how to cook it. According to one member of the survey team, steel axes were introduced to these Aekyom with some amusing results: "They went crazy, chopping down every tree in sight with these new and magnificent tools" (John Stocks, personal communication).

Thus, up to 1950, except for the occasional outbreak of hostilities, the Aekyom experienced peaceful, and from a material point of view, profitable relations with Europeans. However, beginning in the 1950s the Autralian colonial administration took the first of several steps to consolidate their political, economic and social interests in Aekyom lifeways.

Prior to 1950, all administrative patrols into Aekyom territory originated either in Daru or later from a patrol station at Lake Murray, located a considerable distance south of Kiunga along the Middle Fly River. But with the establishment of the first Australian patrol post at Kiunga in 1950 came the promise of more regular and thorough patrols into Aekyom communities. By 1952, patrol officers began to explore the interior of East Awin for the first time.[8] Brief descriptions of hamlet organization, material culture, subsistence activity and aspects of religious beliefs found their way into the pages of patrol reports. Later, in 1954, patrol

officers began to introduce to local people the administration's intention to centralize and consolidate their dispersed garden hamlets into villages (hanua). The reasons for this amalgamation were clear to the Australians who foresaw a number of benefits flowing from it: (1) to administer health and education services; (2) to establish and maintain Australian political control for the purposes of census taking, elections and taxation. But the forced transition to the new political, economic and social order was not recieved with equal enthusiasm throughout the Aekyom population. In 1955, a census patrol into what is now South Awin found that many of the Aekyom hamlets had amalgamated under government and Christian mission influence (see below). But according to patrol reports, few of the new villages were in complete or satisfactory order. In an apparent step to rectify the situation, a village police constable – most likely a Gogadala – was introduced into the area, a visible but temporary sign of the administration's determination to institute its new socio-political order.

While these developemnts were taking place in the southern and western reaches of Aekyom territory, little administrative effort had been directed towards the north and east since these areas – in what is now North and East Awin – had been largely uncontacted. For example, of the 41 hamlets visited by patrol officers in North Awin during 1956, only 16 had been contacted during previous patrols. In fact, only three patrols were undertaken in North Awin before 1963, although oil companies had been sporadically recruiting some local men in the 1930s. And only in South Awin were village constables to be found.

Like North Awin, East Awin was virtually unknown despite the flow of traffic along the Fly River since the late 1800s. Baker briefly patrolled the interior of the Black River area in 1955 while in 1959 Besasparis patrolled territory bounded by the Elevala and Black rivers, and contacted some Knai groups living on the north-east fringe of Aekyom territory. With the exception of patrols to establish Olsobip and Nomad[5] stations outside Aekyom territory, East Awin was simply neglected until the mid-1960s. In 1963, R.R. Stott took the first but incomplete census of East Awin, recording a population total of 583. It was not until 5 years later

that J. MacGregor conducted the first patrol from Kiunga to the northerly hamlets of East Awin including Tminsiriap, Gugondok, Tripen and Tamipen. From 1968 to 1973 only 7 patrols were carried out in East Awin. Not surprisingly then East Awin was not only considered to be an isolated and remote region, but was relatively immune to the influence of the Australian administration. As one patrol officer lamented at the time,

> The anticipated amalgamation [of hamlets] does not seem to be taking place as quickly as was hoped and [Aekyom] people are unsure (sic) of where they wish to settle. This alone could be attributed to this fear of sorcery being worked [among them]. There is an indifference towards the assumed authority of the [village] councillors which makes their position ineffectual if the people will not listen to them. There is definitely a tendency for some or most of the Upper East Awins to return to their earlier nomadic way of life, incorporating small groups together in garden hamlets. Few live in [present day] Drimskai, the rest never (Patrol Reports, 1972/73, Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga).

Internal migrations among hamlet groups combined with frequent retreats into the "bush" on the approach of patrol officers resulted in a generally highly elusive and nomadic East Awin population. In all the patrol reports of the early 1970s, one finds constant references to breakdown in communication between the people and government officials. By the mid 1970s, patrols were sent out with the aim of re-establishing what few political goals had been attained by the administration. However, there was a discernible and pervasive reluctance among more northerly groups in particular to form centralized villages. People inhabiting the villages of Kokobiane, Gurunai, Gugondok, Sanganmenai and Damgropen returned to their "clan" territories and life in their garden hamlets. Thus, even in the 1980s, political links between the administration and East Awin inhabitants are not strong ones. While government officials claim the Aekyom in general are pro-administration, they do not hesitate to add that the people are indifferent and apathetic to the goals of village organization and administration. Regarded by administrators as friendly and minimally cooperative, they are also allegedly "lacking in industry" and (Western) education. In summary, administrators and patrol officers

today state unequivocally that of all the Ok Tedi Area groups, the Akeyom — and in particular those of East and North Awin — are the most "backward and primitive".

In contrast to the situation in North and East Awin, the political, social and economic order in South and West Awin was much more in line with the goals of the colonial government. This was due, in no small part, to the advent of Christian missionaries and their supporting role in the political, social and cultural re-organization of Aekyom life. A branch of the Melbourne (Australia) -based Asia Pacific Christian Mission (APCM) was the first mission evangelical sect to arrive in Aekyom territory. In 1947, the Mission ship "Maino" made its way to D'Albertis Junction at the confluence of the Fly and Alice rivers. Hostilities between local Aekyom and the missionaires were, fortunately, averted — so much so that two Aekyom youths accompanied the missionaries on the trip down the Fly River to Wasua in order to attend school. The youths returned in 1948 with the missionaries Len Twyman, Dick Donaldson, Nigel Gore, Stan Dale and a government official. While Gore camped at the Aekyom hamlet of Bike (situated at the junction of the Ok Tedi and Ok Mart rivers) Dale proceeded to survey the surrounding Aekyom territory, venturing north as far as the foothills of the central mountain range. By 1950, Gore and Rex Nowland were chosen by the APCM to develop the first mission station at Bike which had been a camp site in 1949. In March 1951, a small school was started at Bike by the APCM, who subsequently built a larger mission station at Rumginae (South Awin) in 1954.

Through its mission activity, Rumginae had succeeded in drawing the pouplations of several nearby hamlets into a more centralized "village station", and therefore served to assist the colonial administration in its political and re-settlement policy. In combination with mission influence, the government had succeeded in amalgamating numerous Aekyom hamlets into 27 villages in South and West Awin. But mission influence seemed to be more far reaching. By 1956, the first Aekyom woman had been baptized and the gospel was being spread among local people in the Aekyom language. Shortly aftewards, the first book printed in the Aekyom

language — Mark's Gospel — was published in 1958, which preceeded by one year the opening of the Rumginae air strip. By 1962, there were 4 Aekyom pastors and 9 Gogodala couples spreading the gospel among Aekyom residents of South and West Awin. Thus, an apparently more successful transition to a new way of life among southern and western Aekyom was underway by the early 1960s under foreign guidance.

An important event in this process was the introduction of rubber as a cash crop. More people began to resettle along the present day Kiunga-to-Rumginae road to take advantage of a promising cash economy. However, the costs of doing so were high in terms of traditional subsistence patterns. The Aekyom "... moved many miles away from their sago stands at great inconvenince, especially to their women folk, to grow rubber" (Jackson, 1982:20). And once removed from their traditional territories and resources their nutritional standards began to decline (Jackson, 1979). Yet, the cultivation of rubber did not lead to the economic development anticipated by the Department of Primary Industry, since only a handful of cultivators living close to Kiunga had any success in growing and marketing rubber. Elsewhere, the project was simply abandoned. While Jackson's (1982:20) claim that resettlement among southern Aekyom "... changed their whole life-style ..." seems exaggerated, there is little doubt that more Aekyom came under the influence of mission activity during this period.

Neverthelss, two major problems confronted the APCM in its efforts to establish religious hegemony among the Aekyom. First, missions of other denominations had followed the lead of the APCM and ascended the upper Fly from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. In July 1959, the French-Canadian Montfort Catholic Mission (MCM) established a base at Kiunga and began its first mission patrols throughout the Aekyom region by the early 1960s. About 10 years later, more religious groups made an appearance, including the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. Inevitably, the missions began to compete with one another for indigenous parishioners, momentarily establishing spheres of influence (or in some cases, simply their presence) in various villages.[9]

Significantly, mission influence was closely tied to the goods and services, including health and education facilities,[10] that they actually delivered or promised to deliver to local populations. With an eye open to material benefits, many Aekyom became at least nominal Christians and, in the process, rather adept at manipulating the faith towards their own ends. While the missions competed with one another at one level, some Aekyom parishioners shifted their loyalties and strength of commitment to any particular denomination that looked promising from a material standpoint and/or was compatible with some of the more traditional Aekyom ways.[11]

The second administrative problem, therefore, was rooted in the tenacity of Aekyom culture, especially in East and North Awin. Indeed, by 1972 Donaldson of the APCM had patrolled these census divisions for 3 months and reported grimly that "... the old ways and rituals were being adhered to" (Prince and Prince, 1981:160). Donaldson's observations were to remain apposite 10 years later as today, the APCM describe the Fly River Aekyom as "very different" from their parishioners in the south and west Awin census divisions.

Physical Appearance, Health Services and Temperament

Physically, the difference among the main dialect areas are minimal or non-existant. The Aekyom share a number of Papuan characteristics such as height (generally ranging from 4'10" to 5'8", the men usually being taller than the women) musculature (the men in particular having powerfully built legs with bulging calf-muscles) skin colour (variably light to dark brown and some cases of albinism) and "wooly" black or reddish-brown hair. Although their Yonggom and Pare neighbours claim the Aekyom enjoy a superior diet, the latter also share many of the Papuan or New Guinea signs of poor health. Few men, women or children are spared the discomfort of tropical ulcers, and other skin ailments, such as tinea and grille, are fairly wide-spread throughout the population. More seriously, several strains of malaria are common to the area, as are the signs of malarial infection such as the enlarged spleen (notably in children) and

anaemia (associated with the malarial virus Plasmodium vivax). P. falciparum is the most common malaria, affecting up to 50% of the erythrocytes, while P. Malariae seems less prevalent. According to local health officials in Kiunga, which is itself hyperendemic, it is estimated that 156/1,000 births succumb to malaria-induced death. (Colin Robinson, personal communication). Although it has the same vector as malaria — the mosquito — filariasis is manifestly rare. For example, only 6 cases (3 men, 2 women, 1 boy) were encountered during fieldwork and were identified by the presence of hyper-swollen limbs (usually the legs) and breasts.[12] Respiratory ailments are also prevalent, especially tuberculosis in adults and pneumonia in infants,[13] while dysentry, giardia, and other intestinal parasites are all too common. Although the environment is relatively rich in food resources, Aekyom dependence on protein- and vitamin-deficient staple foods like sago leads to occasional cases of malnutrition, especially among infants.

Western health services have improved over the years following first sustained contact. Yet numerous obstacles to health service delivery continue to frustrate the provincial government's efforts to provide the Aekyom with what the former consider to be adequate health care. With hospitals and health care units restricted to Kiunga and Rumginae, these services are inaccessible to many Aekyom, particularly those in East and North Awin, due to poor transportation and other communication links.[14] While small aid posts in the area service a dispersed population, they are often poorly equipped. However, their effectiveness is also questionable on other grounds: aid post orderlies (usually of Yonggom extraction) must deal with a population that is generally unfamiliar with or ignorant of Western medical knowledge and techniques. This situation is exacerbated by few and irregualr medical patrols by local (Australian) doctors, which may be readily traced to financial constraints at the provincial level.[15]

Yet the lack of available and accessible medical services is an issue that is of secondary importance to many Aekyom. In contrast to the neighbouring Ningerum who make extensive use of Western medicine (Welsch, 1983), many Fly River Aekyom tend to regard Western medicine as

either redundant or irrelevant given the persistence and pervasiveness of sorcery-induced illness.[16] My field observations indicate that most Aekyom of East Awin, when seriously ill, prefer to either "wait it out" in an isolated bush house, seek the services of a traditional healer-magician, or participate in public curing rituals. Significantly, all serious illnesses or illnesses leading to death are invariably traced to sorcery. It follows that only traditional treatment is appropriate as a counter-measure. Furthermore, other "medical" matters are considered to be a question of Aekyom customs and practices. Childbirth, for example, usually takes place in special birth huts, located some distance from the hamlet or village, despite encouragement by health and other officials for women to bear their children in the local hospital. According to my informants, neonatal deaths prior to sustained contact with Europeans were frequent, although the maternal mortality rate seems to have been much lower than that for infant deaths.[17]

At the other end of the life cycle, it appears that many men and women live to the ages of 50 or 60 or more, a trend apparently characteristic of the population prior to sustained contact. Although I did not construct an age pyramind for the study population, there were many older men and women whom I judged to be in their late 50s and early 60s with, apparently, much life yet to live.

At a more personal level, opinions of Aekyom character differ among neighbouring peoples, both indigenous and non-indigenous. I usually found the Aekyom to be courteous, generous and invariably extending their hospitality to me or frequently expressing concern for my general welfare. They always displayed remarkable patience under (to me) the most exasperating conditions, including my incessant questions and cultural awkwardness. The fact that I was married with two children, and that I was the first white "European" to live with them under their conditions had an important positive effect on their willingess to divulge a wide range of cultural information, including material held or controlled only by senior men and women.[18] Fortunately, my research interest in oral tradition fit in well with the Aekyom proclivity to engage one another in tireless

conversation, ranging from idle banter and obscene joking to community forums, parental instruction, personal anecdotes and more serious ritual and mythical discourse. Domestic squabbles, arguments over suspected or acutal cases of adultery and political harangues, usually by senior men or less frequently, adult women, during the evenings or early morning, provided additional themes for linguistic and social study.

Like many lowland New Guinea societies, there are no "Big Men" of the classic Highlands type found among the Aekyom. However, certain men, usually seniors or exceptional hunters, receive an additional measure of respect from the community and may exercise political influence on the basis of it. Most frequently, the highest levels of social respect may be traced to a man's knowledge of traditional ways, or practices relevant to the spirit world and kinship relations, economic activities, narrative and ritual performances. But no one man or group of men are identified as "leaders" in the community in the sense of being "Big Men" (cf. Strathern, 1971). Indeed, until recently there were no material inequalities in the Aekyom community that might provide the basis for the uneven development and exercise of political power (cf. Gell, 1975). The Aekyom are also unusual by New Guinea standards, given the interest men show in very young children (seealso Mitchell, 1978). They may, for example, play the role of caretaker in the mother's (temporary) absence or simply express enjoyment just being with infants and toddlers. The amount of attention that parents in general give to children is reciprocated with remarkable respect and politeness. This proved to be a constant source of amazement to one accustomed to the more liberal environment of Western child rearing practices and behaviour. It is also striking how much time men are able to spend with their children. Since they are not committed to the rhythm and timing of a modern industrial work force, their contact with children is far greater than is usual among Western societies. Men's pursuits such as hunting and housebuilding do entail temporary separation from children, but their general relationships with children are unlikely to change unless they migrate with their families from their homeland to more distant, newly industrializing centres in the Ok Tedi Area, or elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. Indeed, the immediate environment is simply ill-suited for the economic development of commercially viable resources.

The Natural Environment: General Observations

On a macroscopic scale, the Aekyom natural environment consists of small, narrow-crested ridges, growing in relief to the northern mountains and broken up by flat-bottomed to V-shaped valleys through which a dendritic drainage network flows. The major rivers, including the Fly and Alice, cross this area by way of a wide flood-plain consisting of meandering creeks that are flanked by areas of swamp. The vegetation of the ridges consists of tropical lowland rain forest, while sago swamp woodland is found in the valley bottoms.

The geology of the area, combined with the climate, is largely responsible for the low fertility of the soils. Dissected cuesta (low and moderate relief) of deeply weathered pleistocene sediments stretches from Kiunga northwards to the base of the limestone plateaux, which reach an elevation of over 2,000 metres in the Hindenburg Range. The principal soils of the dissected cuesta are acid to strongly acid, freely to imperfectly drained loams, clay loams and clays on the slopes, and strongly acid, very poorly drained organic soils in the valley bottoms. The hillslope soils, which generally get heavier with depth, have yellowish-brown topsoils, becoming red or brown in the sub-soil. Grey mottling can occur where the slopes are gentle. The natural fertility of the soils is largely dependent on the amount of organic matter contained. Traditional subsistence horticultural practices where vegetation is cut down and left to rot in the midst of newly growing gardens adds to the soil's fertility. However, the very wet conditions of the area are, in general, unfavourable to more than minimum small scale subsistence horticulture which, therefore, contributes a minimum amount to the overall fertiliy of the soils.

The weather is often dull during early morning with a fine rain. By the afternoon, the weather has cleared, but sunshine continues to alternate with clouds during mid-day. By mid-afternoon, clouds often form again, especially during the period of south-east winds or the nominal dry season from about June to November (the driest months being from June to September). Towards evening, it rains in hard showers which occur most

frequently during the wet season (from December to May) when the north-west winds prevail. Thunder is also more prevalent in the evenings as it rolls over the mountains to the north. Frequently in the mornings and evenings the clouds descend so that fog envelops the tree tops, giving the impression of being at higher altitudes. However, the land is only slightly above 300 feet from sea level.

On the basis of data obtained from the Department of Minerals and Energy, Government of Papua New Guinea, the average annual preciptiation, which is relatively uniform throughout the year, is about 4,500 mm. (see also Table 4). As not a single dry month occurs when evaporation exceeds precipitation (except under conditions of drought), continuous leaching of the soils takes place where poor to very poor drainage occurs. In addition, the temperature, which ranges from 20°C to 37°C, is ideal under the prevailing conditions of high rainfall and equally high humidity (80% to 90%) for very rapid chemical weathering to take place. Thus the climate, drainage conditions and soil types together produce highly infertile soils and limited land for horticultural purposes.

The Flora

As one travels north from D'Albertis Junction along the Fly River into East Awin, muddy shores and high red banks are exposed to view when the river is at low tide.[19] High red banks abound with begonias and tree ferns which face the river. As one moves inland, tall forests overgrown with lianes and encumbered with rattan and pandanus in the undergrowth make walking extremely tedious if not impossible in the more dense thickets. Species of syzygium are important in the canopy layer and these rough-barked trees (known to the Aekyom as gi) reach a great size and tend to dominate to a height of over 30 metres. Underneath is found an open stand of low substage trees and high woody undergrowth characterized by the palms Hydriastele, Beccariana, Orania Archboldiana, Licula concinna (small fan palm) and pandanus spp (ko). Most abundant in a sparse herbacious layer is a small, stiff selginella. The ground is covered

Table 4.

Mean Monthly and Annual
Rainfall, Kiunga (in inches)*

Dates	Months											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1963-67	18.19	19.09	28.04	12.69	15.04	13.05	8.64	15.92	10.61	11.42	11.86	12.06

Annual = 176.61"

* Source: Paimans (1971)

with leaves and a few small ferns grow on exposed roots and rotting logs and extend a little way up the tree trunks. But mosses, ephiphytes and also lianes are by no means conspicuous elements of the forest.

As far as Macrossan Island, just a few kilometres south of present day Drimgas, the Fly River is broad, deep and smooth flowing. The country continues flat along the banks with occasional breaks of elevated ground and red bluffs a few metres high. On high banks, the forest is tall and luxuriant, but where the ground is low and sodden it is often of ill-grown trees scattered in a mass of lower woody vegetation. On stable banks rising gradually from the water, the forest face is heavily draped with climbing plants and choked with tangled calamus. On eroding banks, it is sharp-cut and new from trees continuously being undermined and falling into the river. The fringing, second growth shrubberies continue at intervals, but cane grass and reeds disappear from the banks.

The course of the Fly in this area is dotted with sand banks and gravel or limestone barriers which require an alert and attentive eye at the bow of a canoe. As one approaches Macrossan Island, the land becomes noticeably more hilly, while the swifter current and various whirl pools make navigation somewhat risky in Aekyom dug-out canoes. It is usual practice for a canoeist to hug the river bank at this point, although most Aekyom tend to navigate the length of the Fly from Drimgas to Kiunga in this manner.

Where the Fly meets the Palmer River the surrounding narrow-crested and steep ridges rise to heights of 50 to 70 metres above the rivers and about 80 to 100 metres above sea level. The soil of the ridges is a reddish clay containing round or angular quartz pebbles. The rock exposed in streams is sandstone and beds of lignite. Here the forest cover continues to be very tall, with the canopy over-topped with numerous palms including Sulubia costata, and Cyrtostachys microcarpa (tmi). The lower layers of the forest are rich in species but as a rule not well defined as strata. In the more open parts, especially in gullies, broad-leaved woody plants and herbs such as saurauria, cyrtandra, begonia,

elatostema, zinbiberaceae, maranraceae and araceaea, together with ferns grow in abundance. The forests are further characterized by a wealth of epiphytes — ferns, orchids, and other flowering plants, mosses and liverworts — in the lower layer as well as the canopy. Large lianas show a crease in abundance as compared with the dry forest of the middle and lower Fly, but a very noticeable increase in species of calamus and eycinetia (sikandokei) is evident.

Other striking and common elements are palms, both feather and fan leaved, pandanus spp. and a cycas. Plentiful almost everywhere on surface roots, undergrowth and the lower parts of trees or some parts of the ridges, the shade-loving mosses and liverworts of the forest form a thick covering on the ground. As I had done it several times, walking through the ridge forests was not a particularly difficult task — if you care little about keeping up with the pace set by Aekyom "guides". But on the river flats, a gregarious pandanus and two species of calamus peculiar to the flood plains and liberally armed with thorns and prickles often so obstructed the forest that even cutting a trail was a matter of considerable difficulty.

Approaching the Black River, the rattan is profusely distributed along the river banks and the surrounding country is entirely forested. Above the junction of the Black River pools are fewer. There are more swift riffles and much dead timber is lodged in the stream. Gravel bars and silt beds are higher and more extensive and the country becomes flatter in general. In places, the river banks are sharp-cut by erosion, which brings the tall forest crashing into the water.

The river changes in character at Macrossan Island. From here on upriver there are flood resistant plants of a new character. They consist of small, tough trees like syzygium, neonauclea and ficus species with wide-spreading, horizontal branches and usually narrow-pointed leaves with which are associated, especially on rocky banks, massed growths of Elatostemas, a few small ferns and other species of selaginella and small-leaved shrubs. Also, tangled growths of calamus line the muddier banks.

The wild sugar cane saccharum arundinaceum (ga) reappears on the higher gravel and sand bars where it forms extensive dense thickets. By the first of July the D'Albertis creeper (Macuna) is coming into full bloom along the river with its soft, crimson flowers (kiapi)

When the rains have been particularly heavy in the mountain ranges, the Fly River, its tributaries and adjoining creeks flood their banks. The Fly River in particular becomes littered with logs, dead trees, and other forest debris which are carried downstream by the swift current. Fertile silt is deposited by this river network in the flood regions which then become ideal locations for gardens. The Aekyom summarize this chain of generative events by pointing out that the Fly River (wai duo) is the "mother" (mae) and the adjoining creeks and tributaries the "daughters of the Fly" (wai duo ya kia).[20]

The Fauna

In addition to providing a home for the Fly River Aekyom, this rich flora and its supporting water networks provide a natural sanctuary for an incredibly wide range of mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, amphibians, crustaceans and insects that is seldom equalled in other parts of the world. These diurnal and nocturnal creatures include a large variety of marsupials such as cuscus, possum, and other Phalangers, rats, bandicoots, wallabies and tree kangaroos, bats, flying fox, wild pig (sus papuensis), cassowary (casuarius casuarius), crocodile (crocodylus novae guinea, crocodylus porosus), various species of large and smaller monitor lizards (varanus spp.), lizards, turtles, frogs, snakes (including the larger pythons, and several poisonous species such as the Death Adder and Papuan Black Snake), fish (barramundi, several species of catfish, sawfish, mud fish, etc.) eels, prawns, crawfish and clams, numerous and ubiquitous insects such as flies, mosquitoes, bees, wasps, centipedes, cicadas, butterflies, tree grubs, a large variety of spiders, worms and leeches, etc. Perhaps the most spectacular of all is the avifauna, including a wide variety of parrots, cockatoos, egrets, eagles, owls,

hawks, shrikes, king fishers, frogmouths, hornbill, goura pigeon, bush turkey, pheasant coucal, honey-eaters, warblers, and many others too numerous to list here. Yet all these birds are pale in comparison to the mesmerizing beauty and distinctive vocalizations of the birds of paradise, of which several New Guinea species are found in the Aekyom region. Thus the forest is alive day and night with the sights and sounds of another mobile world which in many ways the Aekyom associate with their own.

Material Culture

Prior to Malay and European contact, the Aekyom relied on the animal, vegetable and mineral resources provided by their immediate and more distant environments to fashion their technological and other material needs. These include tools, utensils and other equipment, items of personal adornment and dress, as well as the regalia and instruments of ritual and ceremonial activity. The most frequently used tools and processing equipment include the stone axe or adze (kiun), sago pounder (kmen), sago leaching apparatus (see below) awls (monai tu), scrapers/splitters (klanga) and knives (suke).

According to Aekyom mythology, a pig created by the culture hero Wi gave birth to the first stone axe blades which some informants claim are still to be found farther inland in the direction of the mountains. Archaeological evidence suggests that microdiorite, which occurs in dyke form on the southern (South-central) mountain range between Koruppun and the Eilander River (north-west of North Awin) is the source of stone used for Aekyom axes (P. Swadling, personal communication). It is likley that the stones were taken from river beds rather than from a specific quarry and then eventually traded to the Aekyom via routes connecting the Min with their lowland neighbours.[21] Sago pounders, on the other hand, are made from local basalt stones obtained from the more shallow areas of the Fly River.

Traditionally stone axes were used for felling trees, although steel axes have virtually replaced the stone type.[22] Prior to sustained contact, they were also used as weapons of war. Sago pounders are used exclusively in the processing of sago, which is described in greater detail below.

Smaller but no less indispensable tools include awls and scrappers/splitters fashioned from cassowary thigh bones and knives made from split bamboo. Today, steel knives, including the smaller weki and the larger "bush knife" or karang are seen more frequently. Splitters and scrappers are used mainly in the initial stages of processing pandanus fruit: the long, red or yellow fruit pods must be opened/split, then scraped in preparation for steam cooking. Prior to sustained contact, the cassowary bone splitters were also used as daggers in warfare. Awls have a variety of functions that call for piercing holes in bush materials, such as tree bark which is used in the manufacture of domestic utensils. Bamboo knives are multi-purpose tools serving a variety of functions from splicing and cutting rattan and other bush materials to shaving men's beards. Other cutting and/or shaping instruments include honed pig tusks (min pete), bamboo boring instruments (aepine kwepmene) and slate or flint (ike) used to make bone and wooden arrowheads as well as tik tik[23] arrow shafts (totei).

Pottery is unknown among the Aekyom. A functional equivalent to the pot in many households is the water bucket (bite) made from folded spathes of the black palm. It may be used as a water container, sago or pandanus juice container, or as a drinking vessel. Sections of bamboo (kete) are also used as water containers and drinking vessels and in some instances to cook sago. During my fieldwork, both the kete and bite were replaced in a few homes by metal (aluminium) pots, obtained from trade stores in Kiunga.[24] A more elaborate form of the water bucket, which does not appear to have an imported equivalent, is the bark trough (krule)[25] used for steam cooking pandanus fruit. Also, the traditional plate (hlowe) made from bark of the black palm and used to store or serve various foods such as sago, sago grubs, bananas, fish and prawns is

ubiquitous, and has no imported competitors.

The transportation of people, domestic pigs, dogs, foodstuffs, equipment and other materials is often by canoe, a form of transportation usually associated with a riverine people. Aekyom canoes range in size from 15' to 30' or more in length, and from 2' to 3.5' or more in width, depending on the size of tree selected for processing.[26] Fashioned entirely with axes, they have the reputation in the Ok Tedi Area as being the most unstable canoes in all of New Guinea, an evaluation consistent with my experiences and observations.[27] But that is not all. Aekyom canoes are also prone to leaking water, especially near the bow as the canoe bottom is often planed too thinly with axes. And no matter how much caulking is used, it only temporarily alleviates the problem. Thus on longer trips, say to Kiunga, one must frequently stop by the river bank to collect fresh mud in order to obviate water-logged passengers and belongings. Although it is not conclusive evidence, these observations suggest that riverine life may be of secondary importance to the Aekyom. It may also be the case that only in the recent past have they adopted forms of river transportation.[28]

A much smaller but more carefully and precisely engineered item for transportation and storage is the ubiquitous string bag, net bag or bilum (gwae) which is perhaps the most highly valued and useful item of material culture in Aekyom society. Its functional value is clearly evident: they are used to carry food and other material goods, infants, dogs, piglets, and to store for short periods of time, blocks of processed, uncooked sago. A variety of string bags are made and placed in a complex classification that has significant symbolic connotations. Not surprisingly, they are also accorded ritual and mythological value and play an important role in ritual performance and magical settings. Finally, string bags might reasonably be considered an item of clothing as well as ritual attire. There are few places men and women go without their string bags: men sling them over their shoulders or around their necks (letting them fall to the back) while women invariably suspend them from their foreheads and let them hang down their backs. In secret male

ritual, they are decorated and worn by senior men who dance with them during an important stage of male initiation rites. On other occasions, they are decorated and worn by super-humans who dance and transform themselves into the elements, such as wind and rain (Depew, 1982).

In addition to the string bag, most adult men and males over the age of four or five wear a penis case (amo), made from a half shell of a local nut (gansa kei) and held in position by two strings (ku) worn around the waist and usually looped over the testicles. Supported in this manner, the penis is maintained in a more or less upright position. Sometimes a waistband made of several loops of rattan (tkei) is worn and in some areas (e.g., the Palmer River area) may serve as a point of attachment for a grass apron (dangei) that covers the buttocks and nearly reaches the back of the knee.[29] All adult men have the septum and wing of the nose pierced and in some cases, the tip of the nose as well. Nose plugs (tume) made variably of bamboo, pig tusks, cassowary bone, rattan or crescent-shaped sea shells are inserted through the septum while the wing bone of the flying fox (maime seneno) or pieces of grass are placed in the nose wings. Usually, an eagle, hawk or owl claw protrudes through the hole in the tip of the nose.[30] Some women were observed with the septum pierced, through which they passed either a bamboo plug or a twisted section of pandanus leaf (ko wi). Traditionally both men and women wear forehead bands made from pig skin (min katei), bark fibre (ku) or grass (dangei) into which beads of "Job's Tears", coix tubulosa, are sometimes woven. The ears are also pierced so that earrings of bamboo sections or a quill of the cassowary, worked into a circle, can be worn. Plaited fibre is often worn around the arms and sometimes bark string is tied round the legs just below the knees. Less frequently observed, although highly valued, are necklaces of dog's teeth, possum teeth, or pig's tusks. The former two types of necklaces are sometimes woven into waistbands, although I observed only one such item being worn by a man. Long strings of "Job's Tears" (smuda) may be worn as a body chain in a criss-cross pattern which passes across the chest and under the arms, while the large, white, polished shell of Melo sp. called skwene which is obtained in trade from the Yonggom in particular, is worn by married men or women as a chest

pendant. Another type of head adornment obtained in trade consists of strings of small white shells, nassarius sp., woven into soft bark headbands. These too are worn by married men and women.

Attention given to the hair is of special interest. In general, women and younger girls wear their hair relatively short, as do older married men and young boys. However, it is a traditional practice for initiated bachelors seeking wives or attending ritual dances to wear multiple split-leaf wisps or ringlets of shredded sago or pandanus leaf, about 1.5' to 2' in length, plaited into the hair. As Austen (1923) had observed among the Alice River Aekyom, occasionally the plaited ringlets are collected into two pandanus fruit-like ornaments (kei) glued together and painted red with ochre (sangene) and tree sap (kwete).[31] Although my informants did not elaborate on the matter, it was the practice prior to sustained contact for men to shave the head in a crescent stretching from the temples and across the top of the head near the front.

Although there is less variation in women's attire and personal adornment than may be observed among men, the skills required for their production are somewhat more demanding. Only women and older girls, for example, make or know how to make the intricately woven[32] string bags. This is also true for skirts (daebisi) universally worn by females, and by males on particular ceremonial occasions. Several types of skirts are woven by females, sometimes in 3 or more layers, made from the shredded leaf of the sago shoot or from strands of dried swamp grass. Skirts worn for everyday attire are cut shorter in the front than at the back, where they may reach to just below the back of the knee. A mourning skirt, worn by widows for up to a year after their husband's death, is of uniform length, reaching to the knee or beyond.

Women also wear feather headdresses (bose) when participating in ceremonial dance, as well as paint their faces and bodies. However, the men's attire in such contexts is more elaborate, including a greater variety of feathered attire, decorative tree and bush materials such as bark and black palm shoots as well as different dyes, pigments, and

charcoals. Painting and adornment were also applied in times of warfare which seemed to define and enhance the spiritual status of the warrior.

The most frequently used weapon for war (or hunting) is the bow (dimene) and arrow (aepine). Made by men from the wood of the black palm, bows measure from 5' to 6' in length. Arrow shafts four feet in length are tipped with a variety of arrowheads made from wood, cassowary bone, bamboo blade, and the sharp spines of the echidna or spiny ant-eater.[33] Many of the wooden and bone arrowheads are hideously barbed while those used for fishing (and war) consist of four or more wooden prongs, each approximately 5" in length. To protect the arm from the recoil of the split-bamboo bowstring, armguards (krikin) made from bamboo strips woven together with rattan were worn. The Aekyom warrior also had at his disposal offensive weapons used in hand-to-hand combat. Several types of blunt and chipped stone-head clubs were made and used and are known by the names of the stone-head attached to the handle: (1) bro – a circular, flat stone, up to 8" in diameter, with a hole in its center for attachement to a 3' or 4' wooden handle; (2) sindo – a round stone about the size of a softball also made with a hole in the centre; (3) gigi – an oval-shaped stone chipped around the edges, with a hole in the center; and (4) sumeti – a pick-axe like weapon bound to a wooden handle with split cane. Other offensive weapons, with a cutting action included the stone axe and a carved, paddle-shaped wooden club (kari) which functioned as a sword due to its sharp pig-tusk planed edges. Defensive measures were also taken. To protect the chest and abdomen from enemy arrows, a cuirass (napu) or cane armour was worn. According to my informats, it was a most effective barrier to arrow punctures.

Hunting the larger mammals, birds and reptiles is also a male activity supported by several ingenious devices that allow the hunter (or fisherman) to procure game from a distance. Success in hunting sometimes depended on the use of pig, bandicoot and rat traps (kule) made of sticks and logs (see Austen, 1923), and baited with pandanus fruit or raw sago. Pandanus fruit is also a common bait used in the hunting of cassowary and pig from blinds (irine). For fishing, fish weirs (wai homenai) are common

throughout the area being made of black palm and other split woods and stretched across the mouths of creeks and tributaries of the Fly. Placed flush to openings in the wiers are conical fish traps (onsene) made from split bamboo or wood with (occasionally) rings of sago thorns, and bound together with rattan.

Finally, to enhance the meaning and effectiveness of ritual and ceremonial performance, as well as provide diversions during life's daily round, the men fashion and play a variety of traditional musical instruments. As for other Papua New Guinea societies, the list is not extensive: it includes drums, bullroarers, rattles, flutes, and jaw's harps (see Depew, 1982).

Economic Activity

As an interior lowlands people, the Aekyom practice shifting cultivation and to a minimal extent, pig husbandry. However, the sago palm is the most important resource in the economy and culture of the region. It is the source of sago starch, the Aekyom staple food, as well as raw materials for housing, shelter, clothing and implements. Not surprisingly, it is also an important theme or motif in totemic, mythic ritual and other representations.

The Aekyom cultivate most of the sago they use for food, but may also exploit wild varieties. At least 27 varieties were brought to my attention, and are divided between domestic (da) and wild (kawa) categories.[34] These are further distinguished on the basis of morphology, colour and texture, as described in Table 5. Sago palms are propogated by seedlings and suckers. The latter are sometimes planted near present day villages if a creek happens to be nearby. However, the palms grow best in shallow swamps where there is a regular influx of fresh water which also facilitates the processing of sago starch.

The production of sago starch is primarily the responsiblity of

Table 5.

Varieties of Sago Recognized by the Aekyom

Local Name	Category	Description
kiome	da	thorny, large leaves tinged with yellow
ri	"	thornless, long leaves
tmin	"	thornless, long leaves
kome	"	thornless, short leaves
mamgu	"	thorny, short green leaves
maekei	"	thorny, large branching leaves
lum	"	scattered thorns, large leaves
umei	"	small thorns, large leaves
gitraeme	"	multiple thorns, large leaves
kwom	"	short thorns, short leaves
tiome	"	thornless, large branches
taemgro	"	short thorns, whitish branches
gli	"	few thorns, large leaves
gai	"	thornless, large, curved branches
kule	"	thornless, small leaves, white spots
di	"	thorns, red starch
prianai	"	thorns, similar to kawa (see below)
tio	"	short thorns, brown leaves
dwonaeme	"	side leaves thorny
ikei	"	thorny, blackish trunk
hwi	"	thornless, large trunk
tium	"	thornless, large leaves
sumi	"	--?--
gmi	"	--?--
biari	"	thornless, long branches/leaves
kawa	kawa	thorny, particularly hard trunk
ma	"	thorny, hard trunk, large leaves

Note: Varieties marked by "--?--" were known but not observed by the ethnographer.

women: wives, mothers and their daughters. At sunrise, both men and women, sometimes accompanied by their children, leave the village and either walk or canoe (part of the way) to territorial sago gardens (sanam). On the way, spathes of black palm bark (aepene), that will be used in constructing the sago leaching apparatus, are collected amidst seemingly mundane discussion and joking. Many of the hamlet-owned sago gardens are considerable distances from the villages and may require two or more hours to reach by foot and/or canoe. During these sojourns to the "bush" tame piglets and dogs may also tag along, which provide a source of amusement as well as assistance in some other food procuring activities.

The sago production unit usually consists of a family (gile) consisting of a man, his wife (or wives) and children or more frequently two or more cooperating families linked by kinship and affinal ties. When they reach the sago garden, usually the men will first test the palm for the quality of its starch content by cutting into the bark with an axe and tasting the white stringy pith. If the pith is watery (kupe) the palm will be left standing and allowed to mature and another will be selected for testing. Otherwise, a relatively dry pith indicates a substantial amount of extractable starch. At other times, the developing palms are closely watched as it is just prior to flowering that they are at the height of their starch content (Barrau, 1959:155). However, I am not aware of any steps that might be taken by the Aekyom to delay this process.[35]

Once the sago palm is chosen for processing, usually one man chops it down. This takes about 20 minutes. When it hits the ground, the surrounding area shakes with the impact and the men — and sometimes children — cry out "wup wup wup", which to my ears was reminiscent of the Aekyom war cry. Obstructing leaves are cleared from the area around moss-covered bark which is then split and stripped from the upper surface of the palm by men using axes and wooden levers. Once the sago pith (da ambuke) is exposed, it is pulverized with sago pounders by the women. Then it is extracted from the trunk by hand and placed on strips of black palm bark. Leaves from the yaem plant are usually placed alongside the trunk to catch the excess sago pith. The raw pith is then carried to the

leaching appratus which stands in running water closeby. In the meantime, men and women will gather okari nuts which have fallen to the ground from the trees nearby. Or, men may climb the trees and shake their branches to release the nuts.

The sago leaching apparatus is an ingenious device constructed by the women shortly after the palm is felled and the pith exposed. While the pith is being extracted from the trunk, leaf petioles (da yene) are removed from the palm by the women and then mounted onto a framework of cross-hatched sticks (hiopei) placed four or five feet apart at their base. A petiole funnel is mounted onto the framework at an angle of 45° or so. As they stand calf-deep in swamp water, the women knead the raw pith, then wash and strain it through a filter (da gwen) made from the bark fibres of the dmi tree and placed near the lower end of the spathe. The water, containing the suspended starch, drains into a settling tank (mendokei) made from black palm bark gathered earlier while on the way to the garden. Sago shoots (da kane) used to make the snim serve to collect inedible residue (da mone) which is then dumped in a pile onto the ground near the leaching apparatus. The white milky liquid (da dolei) drains into the settling tank where the suspended starch settles at the bottom to form a white layered paste (da dolei) which has the consistency of moist but solid clay. Occasionally, the water is drained from the tank by baling it out with bark spathes or simply tipping it off from the tank. Solid blocks of sago starch are then packed into sago bags (dmi) and carried by the women back to the village. As the harvested sago palms are quite large — they may reach 10 to 18 metres in height — a full day's labour rarely exhausts the starch reserves in the trunk. Therefore, the women usually return to the garden next day to complete the harvesting and processing of starch.

As implied above, little time is wasted in the sago gardens. While the sago is being processed, men and children gather a variety of bush foods, including bread fruit (wone), okari nut, pandanus fruit (ko) and other tree fruits, including wild apples (tai), lemons (ran) as well as sago grubs (psene). Sago grubs are a particular delicacy among the Aekyom

and are found buried in rotting sago logs scattered throughout the garden. The grubs incubate in small oblong nests (hiowe) which are made from the sago pith fibres of the log at its stalk (su). Each nest contains a single grub. Interestingly, my informants claimed that the grubs came from a species of large yellow fly invariably found buzzing around the cut sago logs. These flies, called mome didiyolei, are referred to as the "mothers of the sago grubs" (psen yaem didiyolei). The flies are said to lay their eggs (snolei) in the hollowed-out sago logs from which the grubs hatch. They then migrate to the sago stalk to feed on the pith and build their nests where they will later undergo metamorphosis. Interestingly, the Aekyom eat only the initial larval stage of the insect, either raw or cooked, which they call yai ("his father").[36] Occasionally, a bandicoot (maihei) or giant rat (dumga) which frequent sago gardens in order to feed on the pith and grubs are killed by dogs and then either roasted and immediately consumed or taken back to the village to be eaten later. Significantly, wild pigs also raid sago gardens for the pith and grubs, and use the abandoned gardens as nesting sites.

I did not keep accurate records of sago yields. Barrau (1959:155) estimates that 110 to 136 kg. of edible starch per trunk may be extracted from a near-flowering palm while up to 400 kg. of crude sago may be obtained from naturally sterile palms.

> In a normal swamp forest grove there will be some 25 palms per acre per year which are worth felling. These will produce between 625 and 8750 lbs. of crude starch, with a water content between 35% and 40%, which represents food value of 7,000,000 to 10,000,000 calories. Metroxylon yields, however, vary considerably; certain varieties are particularly poor in starch and it is possible to find dense groves of metroxylon containing only two trees with a very low sago production (Barrau, 1959:156).

Although I cannot quote precise figures, starch yeilds in my field site were in general sufficient for an excess to be sold in the fortnightly Kiunga market — up to 50 lb. of starch per family might be sold. However, not all families necessarily or regularly take/sell sago in the market.

Based on my own observations and comparative data I would estimate a daily adult ration of sago to be approximately 3/4 to 1.5 kg, containing 1,500 to 6,000 calories (cf. Shindlbec, 1980:553).[37]

Sago is high in carbohydrates but low in protein and minerals; vitamins are nearly lacking and fats are absent. Its food value also varies according to the method of preparation. As a powder or flour (da hu) it is cooked in banana leaves over an open fire which yields a doughy consistency. When cooked in a trade store frying pan, it yields a dry, crumbly pancake with a chewy center. At other times, sago blocks not ground into flour are broken into hand-sized pieces and placed directly into the fire. This creates an outer shell or crust that envelops a dry sago content. Usually stored in string bags, Aekyom consider sago good to eat in this condition for up to 6 weeks. But as the water content in the starch decreases, so does its calorie content. From my observations, 10 to 16 days/month are spent harvesting sago. However, the drought which affected the south-west Pacific in 1982 drastically altered the amount of time people would normally spend in the gardens. Some who were willing to make the extra effort in carrying sago pith from their garden to the major rivers and streams went out nearly every day for a period of several months. Others diverted more of their attention to vegetable gardening (though with not much greater success), fishing, hunting or gathering. Whatever the individual's circumstances, few went hungry as the sharing of food supplies within the community is a regular practice and expectation.

In order to supplement their intake of sago, which constitutes 70% to 80% of the diet, the Aekyom rely on a variety of other resources, cultivated and uncultivated. Aekyom practice shifting cultivation of tubers, a practice which reflects traditional settlement patterns. About 1/2 acre of land is cleared for traditional hamlet houses, and small vegetable, fruit and nut gardens (deigwenam) which are not usually intensively cultivated.[38]

Since communal houses are traditionally built on hill tops (if

possible), the gardens are made on the surrounding slopes. Little effort is made in preparing the land for these gardens, although as Austen (1923:343) points out, the immediate surroundings of the house are kept scrupulously clean. Trees are commonly ring-barked or sometimes burned and left where they happen to fall. When the logs and surrounding vegetation begin to dry out, some root crops such as sweet potato (swai), taro (hwam) and cassava and a few economic trees/plams, especially bananas, are planted among the debris of logs, stumps, and scrub. No other attempt is made to clear the gardens and they are not fenced in as is characteristic of Yonggom gardens (see Austen, 1924:11). Breadfuit, okari nut, and pandanus trees are commonly planted around the house while tobacco, indigenous to the Upper Fly, is frequently planted under the house, which is elevated by wooden piles and/or standing tree trunks. After four or five years, or when the house support posts begin to rot, hamlets and gardens are abandoned and re-established elsewhere within "clan" territory, sometimes on the next ridge. Secondary growth by means of species such as macarauga, ficus and hamalanthus will then claim the abandoned sites.

Gathering is an important subsistance activity carried out by men, women and children. In addition to wild fruits and nuts, other vegetable and animal resources are collected. These include eggs (cassowary, bush turkey, crocodile, turtle), lemons, mushrooms, vine fruits, leafy greens, including the glutinous leaf of the deigun tree, wild cucumber (sometimes cultivated), sugar cane, and a variety of insects as well as some species of ground dwelling spiders.

The most prestigious economic activity for males is hunting, which provides the bulk of protein in the Aekyom diet. The most highly valued game include the cassowary (monai) and wild pig (mine). Prior to sustained contact, pigs were hunted by two methods only: the bow and arrow, and pig traps. Hunting pigs with bow and arrow, always considered a dangerous undertaking,[39] may take place by stalking the animal in the bush or by building a hunting blind near abandoned sago gardens or recently felled and split sago palms. In the latter case, pigs

are shot from the blind when they come to feed on the sago pith at night or in the day. Pig traps are similar to those described by Austen (1923:348) for the Upper Tedi River natives. Two rows of small saplings are arranged to form a race (grooved channel). Above this heavier logs are suspended in such a manner that they will fall on and crush the animal when it enters the trap, to get the sago bait. Although wild pigs are relatively abundant in East Awin, traditionally a hamlet could expect to enjoy pork only once or twice every two or three months with a slight increase in supply occurring during the rainy season when pig tracking becomes a much easier task.

Domestic pigs are kept and permitted to roam the village or hamlet.[40] But the Aekyom do not, like their Ningerum neighbours, practice pig husbandry (Welsch, 1983:36) since domestic boars are castrated. The domestic pig population is periodically replenished by sows that breed with feral boars in the bush. Sometimes, the sows will give birth there, particularly in and around new or abandoned sago gardens. The piglets are then either captured in the bush or allowed to follow the sow back to the hamlet or village where they will be domesticated and, in the process, have their ears clipped and tails cut off. Domestic pigs make a contribution to the Aekyom diet during ceremonial pig feasts as well as other occasions such as marriage rituals. Pig feasts, however, are usually contingent on the size and quality of the pig population and are neither the ecological equivalents of those that occur among some Highlands groups (e.g., Rappaport, 1968), nor the occasion for elaborate ceremonial exchanges (e.g., Strathern, 1971). Nonetheless, domestic pork is usually distributed among consanguineal and affinal relatives at these times.

While the wild pig is a dangerous adversary, the cassowary is perhaps the most elusive and mysterious prey in the jungle. Preferring anonymity in the bush, this large, flightless, ostrich-like bird[41] is rarely seen in the adult stage by most Aekyom and infrequently taken by hunters. However, a common Aekyom practice is to catch cassowary chicks with the assitance of dogs (cf. Gardner, 1984) and take them back to the hamlet where they will be raised, not as pets, but for food. Unlike pigs which are easily tamed, the cassowary is not — the Aekyom say

they cannot be — domesticated. According to my informants, an adult cassowary is a much too wild and "dangerous" creature to let roam the village or hamlet.[42] When raised in captivity, the chicks are kept in a pen beneath the communal house and fed various fruits, especially pandanus, until they mature. The adults are then slaughtered and eaten.

Prior to sustained contact, adult cassowaries, like feral pigs, were hunted exclusively with bow and arrows. They were either stalked by the hunter or lured to hunting blinds (irine) built near pandanus trees. The fruists of these trees, which fall to the ground, are a favourite food of the cassowary. Although evasive, cassowaries seem relatively abundant in East Awin forests. My informants pointed out, however, that prior to sustained European contact the residents of Drimgas hamlet ate hunted cassowary only twice or perhaps three times a year. Since 1963, the single barrel Winchester 370 shotgun[43] has slowly been replacing the bow and arrow as the weapon of choice for hunting cassowaries and pigs. This greatly affects the number of game animals killed within the year, since the shotgun tends to be a more effective weapon. As Table 6 shows, hunting success in Drimgas village where 3 shotguns were in use throughout the year exceeds estimates of traditional yields.

A more regular supply of meat, though smaller in quantity at any one time, comes from the hunting of marsupials, rats, bandicoots, flying fox and various birds, the most important of which include bush turkey (dyanai), goura pigeon (tium) and the Papuan hornbill (kbilei). Snakes (sine), and less ferquently monitor lizards (sirom), crocodiles (dupei) and turtles (ambum) are the main reptiles taken while some species of frogs (siame) are the main amphibians consumed. However, the most reliable means of obtaining animal flesh, especially in large quantities, is by fishing. Different methods of fishing are used, depending on the type of fish (bun) sought. Prawns, crayfish (ansaio) and eels (giawai) are either caught by hand or shot with bow and arrow.[44] Fish in larger numbers or schools are caught be a variety of methods. Large fish weirs are constructed across the mouths of creeks adjacent to the Fly River. They are built in the following manner: first, a log is placed across the creek;

Table 6.

Pigs and Cassowaries Shot and Killed, Drimgas Village, 1981/82*

Month	No. of Adults Pigs	No. of Adult Cassowaries
Wet Season:		
December	4	1
January	3	2
February	5	3
March	2	2
April	4	1
May	3	1
Dry Season:		
June	3	1
July	1	0
August	1	0
September	1	1
October	2	0
Grand Total:	29	12
Mean (per month):	2.6	1.1
Wet Season Total:	21	10
Wet Season Mean: (per month)	3.5	1.6
Dry Season Total:	8	2
Dry Season Mean: (per month)	1.6	.4

* These figures are not necessarily representative for any given year with a typical rainfall distribution. The Dry Season of 1982 was especially dry because of the extensive drought. Furthermore, these figures are for the amalgamated poputalion of Drimgas village — 224. Figures for pre-contact hamlets with much smaller populations and no shotguns in use would, as suggested above, be significantly lower. However, they do indicate that more animals are taken during the wet season, while the cassowary is less frequently shot and killed than the feral pig.

second, sticks are placed perpendicular to the log and stuck into the muddy creek bottom, leaving an opening (inam) in the wall for the passage of the fish; third, the sticks are bound tightly together with rattan, while wild pandanus or breadfuit roots are planted beside the sticks in order to secure and seal the wall. When the Fly River is at high tide, fish swim through the inam of the weir and up the adjoining creeks, looking for food (according to my informants). At low tide, the fish swim back down the creeks towards the Fly but their passage through the inam is blocked by either black palm sticks placed in the opening or a "venetian blind" apparatus called skwene which may be unrolled along supporting posts to cover the inam beneath the water's surface. The fish are now confined to the shallower waters of the creek where they are harvested by: (i) stupification with kaiyokei (Derris root); and either (ii) collected by hand; or (iii) shot with the yarlongei or bun tien arrows. Smaller fish capable of squeezing through other openings and cracks in the fish weir are caught in conical traps and impaled on sago thorn rings. Occasionally fish hooks (bading) baited with worms (saem) and tied to a string are used by indvidual fishermen. However, this is a method introduced into the Aekyom region by foreigners which in contrast to traditional fishing methods does not involve men and women in cooperative groups.

In Aekyom culture and society hunting, especially large game, is generally recognized to be a male activity since the provisioning of meat (saio) is largely a responsibility of the men. Sometimes Aekyom women engage in minor hunting assisted by domestic dogs which are highly valued for their hunting skills. The dogs are used mainly to flush out, kill or capture piglets, cassowary chicks, rats and bandicoots. Dogs are also the hunting companions of men who puruse much larger and more dangerous game in the deep bush (dei dulei).

Interestingly, dogs (psaene) like pigs are the only non-human creatures that may freely wander through the village or hamlet grounds. But unlike pigs, dogs traditionally have free access to exclusively male or female quarters in the communal house. Furthermore, unlike their human masters who are separated by a central partition and are prohibited from

crossing into the living space of the opposite sex, dogs may frequent either women's or men's sections of the house. But in doing so, they are not always welcome. For example, dogs tend to be treated in a seemingly callous manner. In contrast to small pigs, they are rarely fed by humans, including their owners, and are often kicked out of hearth and home where they constantly scavenge for and readily devour scraps of sago, banana, meat, fish, and animal bones which they pulverize, between teeth and jaws with startling efficiency.

Dogs are usually castrated, a practice the Aekyom say not only makes them grow larger and stronger, but discourages the sexual "harassment" of bitches and ensures a more attentive hunting companion. Like some domestic pigs, dogs may become very ill — natured and dangerous pets. Although they do not pose a direct threat to humans, dogs, particularly males, frequently fight and may kill one another unless humans intervene. If a dog is killed in this manner verbal conflict between respective dog owners almost invariably follows and usually raises issues of compensation. More seriously, dogs sometimes kill domestic piglets. If not immediately compensated for by the dog's owner, such losses may and usually do lead to an exchange of verbal insults and/or physical violence. In more extreme cases the owner of the pig killed may resort to sorcery. Traditionally, situations might become powder kegs by escalating to a level of group interest and involvement in the dispute. If the respective owners do not reconcile their differences, such incidents might lead traditionally to warfare or more frequently to serious sorcery attacks. In order to avert hostilities, compensation by replacement of the animal lost or a cash payment nowadays is sufficient to relax tensions and subdue (potential) combattants.

Dogs and pigs are a focus of particular attention at other cultural levels as well. For example, the human community tends to be more receptive and endeared to pigs, especially piglets.[45] Pigs, for example, are the constant companions of women and often share their sleeping quarters. Here they are either tethered by one leg to the house wall or kept in a small pen (grale) near the hearth where they will be fed sago,

bananas, and sweet potatoes by the women. More mature and adult pigs often sleep under the house. But they are not kept in a pen like the cassowary unless a feast is imminent. The closeness of pigs to the human community is also reflected in Aekyom naming practices and totemic associations. Pigs, who sometimes appear in Aekyom mythology as "clan" ancestors, are given names that describe various types of birds and are also applied to humans. Dogs, on the other hand, are given names associated with the bird world but never directly with the human world. Furthermore, the death of domestic pigs is a cause for mourning — usually involving women and intense weeping. In sharp contrast, dogs pass away with the expression of little or no grief by anyone, except perhaps when compensation is an issue for the owner. But despite these differences, both dogs and pigs are valued trade items and are exchanged among the Aekyom as well as with the Yonggom, Min and, to a lesser extent, the Pare.

In the past, trading relations with neighbouring peoples of the Ok Tedi Area supplied the Aekyom with coveted goods otherwise unavailable in their immediate environment. Equally significantly, they reflect themes relevant to the Area's ethnohistory and to the cultural content of Aekyom relationship categories. For example, most Aekyom refer to or address their trading partners (i.e., non-Aekyom speaking peoples) as keisene, a term whose root, sene, also appears as a reference term for certain collateral relatives. An equally interesting term for "trading partner" is used among the Aekyom of North Awin (i.e., the North-central Aekyom). According to informants in the village of Saisu, North Awin, Faiwolmin trading partners resident in Olsobip are referred to as "kiguam", which as a relationship term among the Aekyom means "grandfather". Alternatively, residents of Saisu claim "Our brothers are in Olsobip".[46]

According to the inhabitants of Saisu village, the Aekyom of the surrounding region received steel axes, shell "money" (slai) and tobacco from their trading partners in Olsobip and gave in return dog tooth and pig tusk necklaces, string bags, sago bags, black palm bows and arrows. According to informants of the Rom "clan" of Ketmoknai village (North

Awin), Aekyom trade items coveted by the Min were also exchanged for the sisiyen or shell headband possessed by the Faiwol. It is also likely that the marriage shell pendants (skwene) were obtained from the Min by the North-central Aekyom since many informants claimed these shells originated in the Sepik River region. Over time, skwene achieved general circulation throughout the Ok Tedi Area.

Historically a number of hamlets among the Aekyom-Skai of East Awin have intermarried with Min people inhabiting the adjacent mountains of the Blucher Range and the Murray and Strickland rivers (e.g., Barth, 1971:177). In some cases the marriage exchanges seem to have been of such regularity and significance that a transformation of group identity occurred. For example, according to Carpenter (1971/72:25),

> ... The Galupmin ... are a breakaway from the N'Gumin who through the years of close contact with the Awins have become in fact an Awin group. They have abandoned the Knai culture and language, practice bride-exchange with the East Awin and have only the most sketchy knowledge of remaining Knai groups. Fear of Knai peoples is a common reaction of groups in Olsobip area and the Knai themselves are divided, the N'Gumin being the most feared of all. Between the Galupmin and the Awin were traded string bags, sago bags, bows and arrows, beads, axes, knives and brides ... The Kono trade with the Awin and the Daberepmin; these latter trade with the N'Gumin who trade with Augopmin and Mirapmin who in turn trade with the Iadibimin. Pigs were traded outside this ring for steel axes or knives and salt (see also Barth, 1971:177-179).

It would seem that the cultural boundaries defining the Min are far more permeable to outside influences and changes than those of the Aekyom.[47] Among the southern Min, for example, the Faiwolmin have adopted Aekyom dress styles as well as communal house designs (Barth, 1971:175) without reciprocal borrowings among the Aekyom or general reversals in cultural diffusion of material traits. However, the same cannot be said for social and symbolic classification. Saisu villagers, for example, maintain they did not intermarry with the Min groups who were also partners in trade. To do so would be a breach of "clan" exogamy. Interestingly, a cursory census of Saisu revealed neither extant nor

(recent) historical marriage ties between the Aekyom of Saisu and Faiwolmin groups. Moreover, of the three domiciled "clans" of Saisu which include the Holei, Kbine and Peiwolei, the last is generally regarded to have originated in Olsobip a long, long time ago (semp song mena). This type of association with the Min, however, is not unique to Saisu as some other groups in North and East Awin trace their identities or migration histories to areas now inhabited by people of Min rather than Aekyom ancestry. It would appear then that group definitions among the Aekyom are not as discrete as one might at first assume[48] judging by their relative resistance to other foreign cultural influences.

With the advent of Europeans and sustained contact with the colonial and provincial administrations, traditional trading partners[49] and the associated trade routes became less important to the Fly River Aekyom and other cultures of the Ok Tedi Area; new kinds of goods coming from new kinds of "trading partners" began to filter through the Area. Some of these goods were to have a significant impact on the Aekyom way of life. By the 1950s, the steel axe had practically replaced the stone axe while firearms became a preferred hunting weapon. No less significant was the introduction of tinned fish and rice as alternatives to traditional foods. But while the former have gained in popularity, largely as a result of their identification with "wealthy whites", their cultural value has not superceded that of traditional foods. Indeed, the continued exploitation of sago, game animals and fish is central to Aekyom perceptions of their own identity and self-worth.[50]

CHAPTER 3. ASPECTS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION: THE AEKYOM HAMLET

Introduction

Most Aekyom today are associated with centralized villages formed initially under the encouragement of the Australian colonial administration.[1] However, many Fly River Aekyom continue to live under social conditions characteristic of the pre-contact hamlet way of life. This assertion is justified initially by two general observations concerning Aekyom relationships to the wider environment and the distribution of the population in space. First, some Aekyom populations associated with the new village settlements are clearly transient. People continually return to their "bush houses" (traditional hamlets) to live and work. Second, the hamlet way of life is reimposed on a superficially different collective existence in the villages. The spatial relationships among traditional hamlets are, in general, reproduced and compressed in the physical setting of the villages. For example, "clan" members, as members of domestic communal units tend to build their houses near to one another or near those of other "clans" with whom they inter-marry or have inter-married in the past, or with whom they share land in cooperative "bush associations". More importantly, hamlet-defined relationships to the land and its resources are rigidly maintained. Such hamlet-based constraints on resource exploitation under the new conditions of village settlement have a greater potential today to generate conflict over resources, especially food, than was known prior to sustained European contact.[2] However, Aekyom integrity combined with, at times, extraordinary efforts in the food quest maintain relative harmony within the community.

This chapter focuses on the traditional hamlet as the basic unit of Aekyom social organization. It begins with a general discussion of the physical setting. The distributional and demographic features of hamlet organization are documented while improvements to land, including house types, shelters and garden sites are described in detail. This leads to a

discussion of how, from the Aekyom point of view, hamlets are distinguished from one another. This question is addressed by reference to aspects of territoriality and the Aekyom naming system. In the following section, the social characteristics of the hamlet are discussed in terms of local group composition and its continuity over time. Here, residence patterns and hamlet membership criteria are related to the corporate nature of local groups as property-holding units. Within this wider context, intra-hamlet relations are examined with special emphasis on the division of labour and gender relations. In the final section, inter-hamlet relations are discussed from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The political status of traditional hamlets is outlined and brought to bear on a discussion of the conditions and circumstances of pre-contact warfare. Then attention is drawn to the character of "bush associations" as a particular feature of inter-hamlet economic ties. A brief introduction to the network of kinship and affinal ties as the basis for coordinating relations within and between domestic, political and economic spheres draws the chapter to a close.

The Physical Setting: Demography and Architecture

Population Densities and Distribution

Bothprior to and in the early years of sustained European contact the entire Aekyom population was distributed among numerous hamlets located throughout the region of the Alice, Upper Fly, Palmer, Black and Elevala rivers. Unfortunately, since I did not undertake a systematic demographic study of the Aekyom population as a whole, precise figures on the number of Aekyom hamlets and the size of their resident populations during this period, or the range of variation in both variables over time, are difficult to establish. Even if this had been a major research objective, the task would have been formidable, if not impossible. Estimates based on the historical record are limited since census figures are affected by geographically restricted and irregular administrative

patrols throughout the region, especially during the period 1950-1963 and later, as well as by the impact of centralized villages on the continuity of traditional hamlet settlement patterns, particularly in the southern and western areas. Nor can the more reliable aspects of the historical record be used as unequivocal indicators of people/hamlet/land ratios since population densities vary throughout the region. Nevertheless, it is possible to make a rough estimate of the number of pre-contact hamlets and their population sizes on the basis of the following data and criteria: (1) the extant population size of approximately 9,262; (2) the negligible impact of introduced diseases and the minimal effects of Western medicine on birth and death rates[3] (Colin Robinson, personal communication);(3) informants' statements on hamlet numbers and population sizes prior to and during the early years of sustained contact, supported by the observations of patrol officers; and (4) field measurements of house dimensions, capacities and numbers by myself, patrol officers and other officials.

There appears to be a narrow range of variation in the number of houses forming the traditional hamlet. The median number of houses is 1 (one) per hamlet. In general, they are often quite large, measuring on the average (mean) 40' x 33'. Occurring with far less frequency are two large houses per hamlet, with similar dimensions. In some cases, one large house might share the same hamlet site with a smaller house, whose mean dimensions are 15' x 20' (although smaller houses may range from 10' x 12' to approximately 25 ft.^{2}). Occasionally, only one such small house was to be found in the hamlet. Large houses usually accommodate from 25 to 35 or more people, while smaller houses are often occupied by 15 to 25 people. Table 7 provides relevant data on the characteristics of various hamlets among the Aekyom of East Awin during the period of early sustained contact with Europeans.

While these selected data are not necessarily definitive of the physical characteristics of all East Awin hamlets, or all hamlets throughout the Aekyom region, they do permit some suggestive inferences. If there was a pre-contact mean of 34 people per hamlet and a

Table 7.

East Awin Hamlet Sizes During the Period of Early Sustained European Contact*

Year of Record	Hamlet Name	No. of Houses	Hamlet Population	House Description
1952	Drimgas	1	25	1 large
	Ikengre	1	15	1 small
	Tmindemesuk	1	27	1 large
	Gredemesuk	2	53	2 large
	Guertmin	2	48	2 large
	Miengas	3	61	1 large, 2 small
	Misuamergere	1	23	1 small
	Tmingondok	2	61	2 large
1962	Gurumai	1	35	1 large
	Pamienai	1	18	1 small
	Kokobiane	1	32	1 large
	Grumena	3	43	2 large, 1 small
	Sanganamenia	1	24	1 large
	Womo	1	15	1 small
	Worompen	1	24	1 small
	Grand Total	22	504	

Mean population per house: 23
Mean population per hamlet: 34

* Source: Patrol Reports, 1952, 1963: Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga; National Archives, Port Moresby. The years 1952 and 1963 are the periods of first sustained contact for the respective listed hamlets. Not all East Awin hamlets are included in the recorded lists for these two periods.

regional population of approximately 9,262, then the mean number of Aekyom hamlets prior to sustained contact would be approximately 272, depending on several demographic circumstances such as migrations, political events (e.g., warfare) and marriage. However, this figure may be too low, even as a minimum, given that there are 71 villages (in 1982) throughout the Aekyom census divisions and that many of these consist of more than four amalgamated hamlets.[4] A more reasonable estimate would be from 300 to 350 hamlets in the Aekyom region, with a mean hamlet population in the range of 26 to 31 persons. This estimate is in fact close to random field observations and inquiries in other Awin census divisions.

In terms of the estimated distribution of hamlets, the mean area of land exploited per hamlet would range from 16.5 km^2 to 19.3 km^2. This would result in a minimum of 1.3 km^2 and a maximum of 1.9 km^2 of land exploited per person, a range that parallels the mean density of 2.1 persons/km^2 estimated for the Aekyom population as a whole (see Table 3). The above distributional and demographic features of Aekyom hamlets may be summarized in the following Table:

Table 8.
Distributional and Demographic Characteristics of
Pre-contact Aekyom Hamlets
(estimated)

Mean No. of Hamlets	Mean Hamlet Population	Associated Hamlet Land
300 - 350	26 - 31	1.3 - 1.9 km^2/person

The Hamlet House and Related Dwellings

The main residential unit among the Aekyom is the aewe, a communal dwelling whose rectangular shape is characteristic of many lowland-type houses (see Diagram 1). Each hamlet traditionally consists of one, two or occasionally three aewe, built on a single ridge or neighboring ridges,

DIAGRAM 1.

THE AEKYOM HOUSE

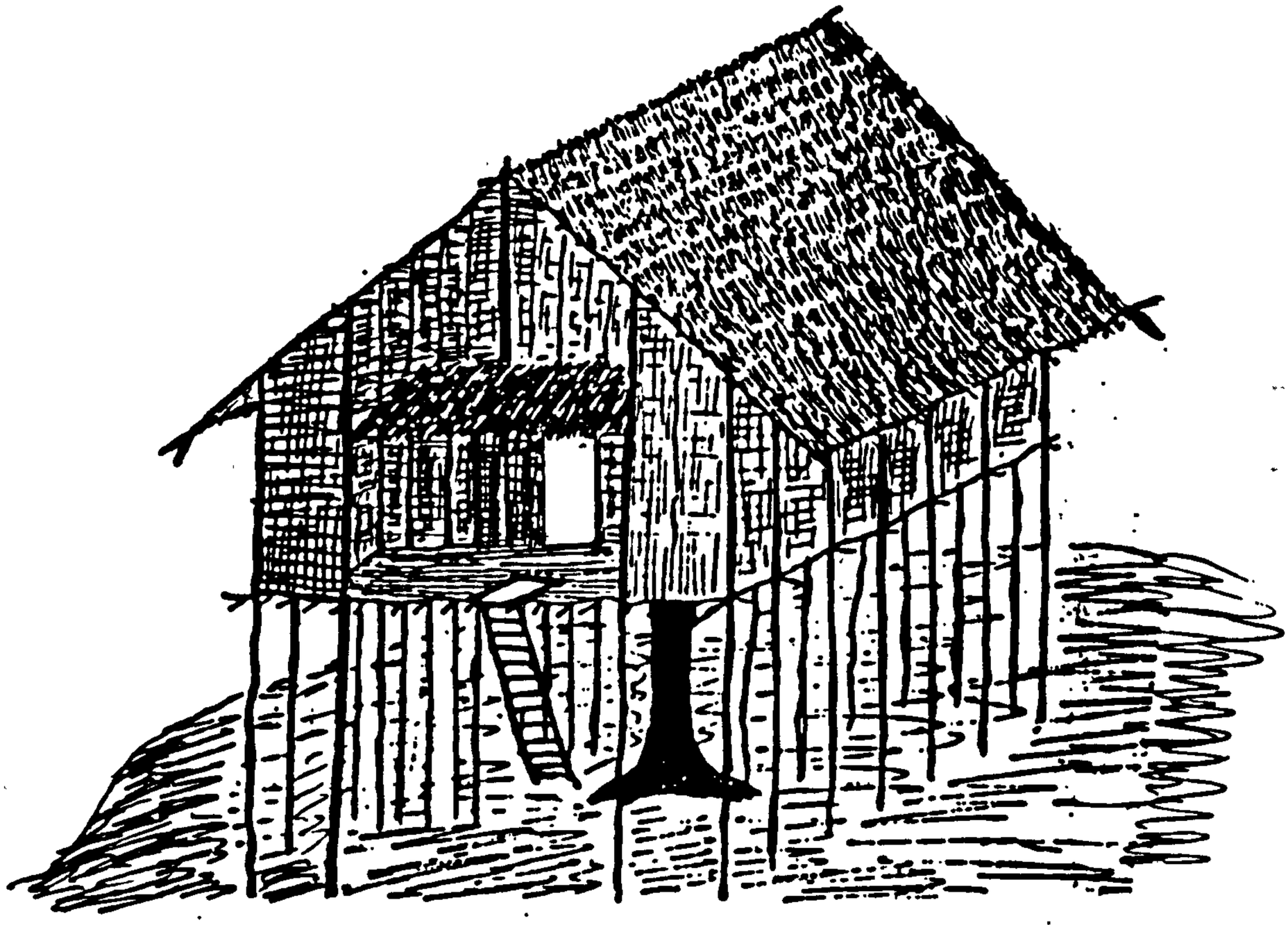
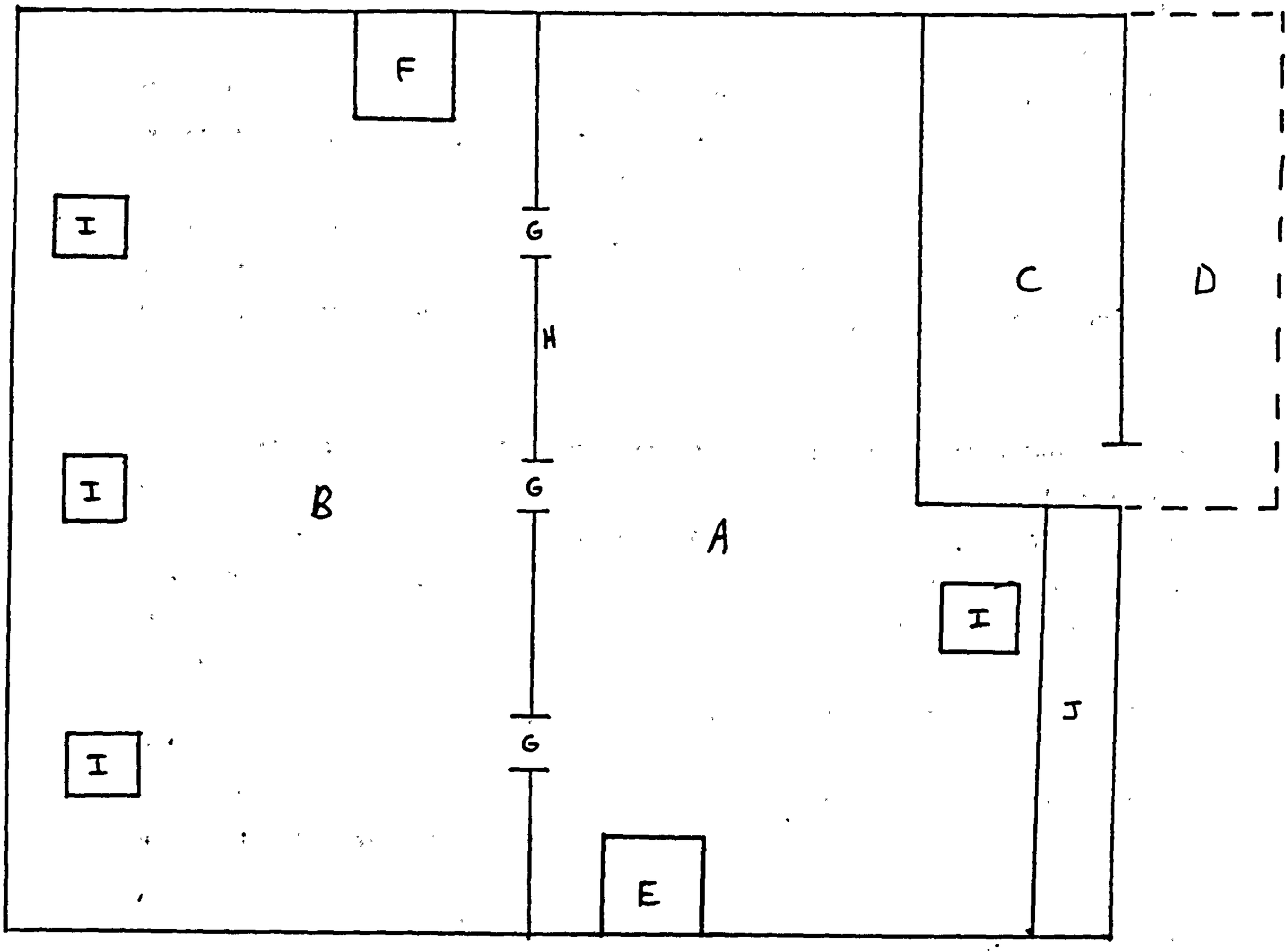


DIAGRAM 2.

INTERIOR PLAN OF THE AEKYOM HOUSE



A men's quarters (utio)

B women's quarters (rine)

C old men's quarters (ambine)

D bachelors' quarters (kwaten knunai)

E men's entrance (teinam)

F women's entrance (teinam)

G window (inam)

H partition (irine)

I fireplace (dine)

J shelf (kiorin)

usually within shouting distance from one another. As a relatively self-contained residence unit, the aewe is the centre of daily life where domestic activities, leisurely pursuits, eating and sleeping take place. In this context, the Aekyom use the term aewe[5] to refer to a certain type of communal house: i.e., a house that accommodates married men and women, their children, members of extended families, including grandparents and frequently other affinal relatives. While aewe is used to refer to the house as a physical structure, the term is qualified when used to refer to the house as a social unit: i.e., to the house and its inhabitants. In the latter case, the appropriate terms of references are alamene aewe ("house with wives") or girimen aewe ("house of the giri pig"). Thus, in its social sense, the meaning of aewe also specifies a local group and, as will be shown in the present and following chapters, serves many functions within Aekyom society as a kinship, economic, political and ceremonial unit.

Traditionally, all Aekyom hamlet houses are constructed by men according to a general model of tree houses. Prior to sustained European contact they were built in two basic forms. The first, which I did not observe since it had "fallen out of fashion" by the 1960's, was literally built among tree branches and supported by a central tree trunk. The second is also constructed around a tree trunk but in addition is supported by numerous wooden piles which raise the house variably 6' to 20' above ground level. Today, this second type of house may be observed even in centralized villages. However, under introduced settlement conditions they are more frequently supported by wooden piles only.[6]

For an account of such houses at a time of first contact I reproduce below Austen's (1923:342-343) pellucid description of an Aekyom house in the hamlet of Gwenbip, West Awin.

> The main posts of the house were three trees from which the upper branches and part of the trunk had been chopped off 50 to 60 feet from the ground. These trees are sometimes used as rests for the ridge poles but not at Gwenbip. The tree posts were not in the

> center of the house, and they came level with the sloping roof. The rest of the posts or piles, usually about 45 to 50 feet high, are placed in holes dug in the ground. These piles are not more than 5 to 6 inches in diameter, so were it not for the trees which are used as the main posts supporting the house, it would easily be blown down by a heavy wind. Even so, it is rickety, and when one walks along the floor the whole house shakes. Strengthening posts are sometimes placed from one corner of the house to the opposite corner in the ground. When the posts are in position it appears that a scaffolding is erected 6 to 8 feet from where the floor is to be laid and on this the housebuilders work. First, strong bearers are placed lengthways and crossways and fixed to the piles. On these a series of small saplings are tied to the bearers, all lying one way. On this are laid similar saplings, but cross-ways. Then finally the flooring proper is tied on, of [black] palm split into inch widths. Holes are left in the floor from which are suspended fireplaces of saplings covered to a depth of a foot or so with mud. The fireplaces as a rule do not come level with the floor but are at least 6 inches below it. There is also a hole of about 3 or 4 feet square left at one end of the house, through which comes the women's stairway. A door for this latter opening is made of stout sapling on which are tied smaller ones at right angles. Split rattan is closely interlaced among the small pieces of saplings, and the whole forms a strong meshwork door. The walls of the house are usually of sago midrib, split into narrow lengths. The roof is made of sago leaves in the usual style, except that the ridge of the roof, instead of meeting in the center and having a capping of further leaves, has one side over-lapping about 2 feet. It appears to be the north-west side that is always the longest. As a general rule there are two ladders to a house, one underneath the house leading up through the hole in the flooring and the other outside the house at the opposite end, which leads up to a small platform outside a small door in the wall. The former stairway is for the use of the women, the latter for the men.

Austen's description of the aewe is applicable to the house designs found among the Fly River Aekyom. However, historically, variations of hamlet house entrances called teinam have been recorded. For example, the teinam might take the form of a single, bi-partioned trap door located on the house floor which defined separate men's and women's entrances. Access to the entrances was from underneath the house along notched logs

or rattan-bound wooden ladders (e.g., Champion, 1931:24; MacGregor, 1890:59).

In most hamlets and villages today, the men's teinam is located along the front wall in juxtaposition to the women's teinam. In a few cases, there may be only a single teinam for men and women along the front wall. However, the general architecture and building materials remain those of pre-contact society.

In order to gain a clearer picture of house designs, the reader may wish to refer to Diagrams 1 and 2. Diagram 1 features the form of aewe commonly built today. Diagram 2 shows the interior plan, which requires further comment.

The most striking characteristic of the interior of the aewe is a partition called irine, running the length of the house – usually in the center – and dividing the men's section or utio from the women's, called rine. Made from the stalk of the sago palm (u) the partition is variably 5' to 10' or more in height and effectively confines men and women to their respective sections. According to traditional practice, all females, uninitiated males up to the ages of 4 or 5 and piglets are restricted to the rine. Married men, widowers and some older males may occupy the utio while old men (wìké) usually prefer the ambine, a separate male section of the house elevated about 18 inches above the main floor of the house.

Running parallel to the walls that enclose the rine and utio are several fireplaces (dine), approximately 4 to 6 square feet. Over the dine wooden racks or platforms (grisi) are erected and used for smoking food, curing tobacco or drying arrow shafts. In addition to these functions, the dine serve as cooking areas and a source of heat during chilly evenings. Although fireplaces are also constructed in the utio, it is usually a woman's (wife's, mother's) task to do the cooking for her husband and/or dependents, as well as visitors. As a result, raw and cooked foods are passed between the utio and rine through a square hole (inam) in the irine.[7]

In some houses, shelves (kiorin), approximately 4 or 5 feet in width and about 5 feet above the floor extend the length of the utio wall (tute). Here men store their tools, implements, string bags, earth pigments, dancing regalia, musical instruments, other valuables and food. Weapons such as bows and arrows usually lean against the wall while bird feathers, animal and bird bones are stuck into its cracks. Resin torches (pan ri) invariably litter the floor where the skulls of pigs, cassowaries and crocodiles may also be found. In the rine one finds other items such as cooking utensils including the ubiquitous tongs (snapen), cooking stones, water buckets, bamboo tubes, string bags, assorted items of clothing, such as grass and sago shoot skirts, etc.

In addition to its status as a residential unit, the hamlet house is also identified by several other distinguishing features. Most notably, it was a traditional practice for the Aekyom to bury their dead (i.e., deceased hamlet residents) in graves (hwen togin, hwen kapunai) in the ground beneath the elevated house. For certain categories of relatives (i.e., males of the +2 terminological level — see Chapter 4) the corpse was wrapped in tree bark and placed on a burial platform (kiorin) erected underneath the house. Here the body was left to decompose, being protected from scavenging dogs and pigs by a small fence (grale). Today, these burial practices are discouraged by the government and local missions. As a result, the dead are buried in graves situated some 10 metres from the house. These graves are often distinguished by a small shelter, resembling the roof of a house. (The house is used to shelter the dead for up to 3 days prior to other mortuary rituals.) The space underneath the house was also reserved for captured cassowaries, where they were caged until mature enough to be slaughtered and eaten. While adult pigs were not usually caged like the cassowary, they were temporarily "coralled" in a series of connected pens (constructed under the house) prior to a pig feast. Finally the ground beneath the house is also used as a garden, where the Aekyom often plant tobacco.

An apparently less common but no less important feature of the hamlet aewe is a special compartment reserved for local bachelors. On

some hamlet houses a loft is constructed high above the main floor of the house and entered via the utio. Here a number of younger unmarried men and boys often sleep. However, not all hamlet houses are equipped with kwaten knunai. More commonly, bachelors from several neighboring hamlets traditionally and jointly occupy a separate house called k'waten knu aewe ("house of readying men", "house of bachelors who will become men").[8] Similar in design to hamlet aewe, although lacking the irine, these houses are rarely constructed today as bachelors usually occupy the utio of the hamlet aewe.[9] The effects of residential centralization combined with the effort required to build these houses seem to account for their relative scarcity: indeed, the traditional k'waten knu aewe is built 80 to 100 feet from the ground, supported by a central tree trunk and surrounding branches (cf. Austen, 1922:10; 1923:343).

Some 15 to 20 metres from the hamlet aewe the Aekyom dig pits to a depth of about 15 feet and enclose them within small shelters covered by a sago-thatched roof. These are used as latrines which, according to Austen (1922:6,11), are traditionally unique to the Aekyom among indigenous groups of the Ok Tedi Area. In addition to their obvious functions, latrines were used as ossuaries : the bones of the dead who were placed on burial platforms were deposited in the latrines. However, this practice has been discontinued under administrative influence and pressures. Significantly, latrine shelters resemble those that are today built above graves.

Associated with the hamlet house but built a considerable distance from the hamlet site are a number of other houses and shelters that serve a number and variety of functions. Temporary shelters resembling lean-to's are often constructed at sago gardens and fishing sites and may be occupied for up to two weeks at a time as living quarters. Somewhat more eleaborate but also temporary edifices are built and reserved exclusively for females. These include menstrual huts (slewe) where women are isolated for the duration of menstruation and birth huts (kia duweden aewe) where women, assisted by consanguineal and/or affinal female relatives, give birth to children and care for them for a week or so before

returning to the hamlet house. While menstrual huts are constructed by women, birth huts are often built with the assistance of males, invariably the husband, in the deep bush or jungle (dei dulei, rine). However, these predominantly female shelters must be avoided by all males at all other times, particularly when occupied by women.

Similarly, there are two types of temporary dwellings that are primarily or exclusively built and frequented/occupied by males. The first is the hunting house or slewe, normally built by men. Although women are not prohibited from entering or using the hunting house, as they sometimes accompany their husbands when it is in use, it is more often occupied by men alone for up to a month or two, while hunting cassowary, pig, monitor lizard and other large game. The second type of house is the male initiation house or komenai which is taboo (koma)to all females and uninitiated males (one). The komenai, located deep in the jungle, is used by male initiators and novices for a short period of time, often 2 or 3 days, and is then aba ndoned and left to rot (domkina).

With the exception of male initiations, all other ceremonial gatherings, including song and dance (yoke duwene) and pig feasts (mine gaema kuya dinana – "gathering together and eating pigs") require the construction of small shelters – made from black palm leaves – called kuso, – that can accommodate guests from neighboring or more distant hamlets who either participate in the ceremonials, which invariably take place in the hamlet aewe, or compromise part of the audience.

Perhaps the most conspicuous features of Aekyom dwellings and shelters are their relationships to the ground, and the organization of space vis-à-vis differences in sex, and social status. In general, alamene aewe ("married people's house"), kwaten knu aewe ("bachelor's house") and garden shelters are elevated above the ground, either by tree trunks/wooden piles or tree trunks/branches. In contrast, slewe (menstrual huts, hunting houses), komenai (male initiation house) and shelters for/at fishing sites, graves, latrines are built level to the ground.[10] Traditionally, distinctions of sex entail both horizontal and

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vertical differentiation in space while differences in male social status may be observed along vertical dimensions. These observations and distinctions are summarized in Table 9.

As a configuration in physical space, the hamlet house may be distinguished from other Aekyom dwellings and edifices on the basis of design, internal structure and particular features of the hamlet site. Sociologically, the hamlet house is further identified by its status as the major residential unit that accommodates married men and women and their relatives, and by its internal divisions that separate females from males, and allocate males of different social status to different elevated spaces within the male division of the house. These are common features among the Fly River Aekyom and may be observed in other Aekyom dialect areas. However, as sociological entities, hamlet houses are also separated one from another according to their distincitive identities as hamlet houses. These are based, firstly, on the possession of names and secondly according to their associated hamlet memberships which provide a focus for the organization of groups and group relations.

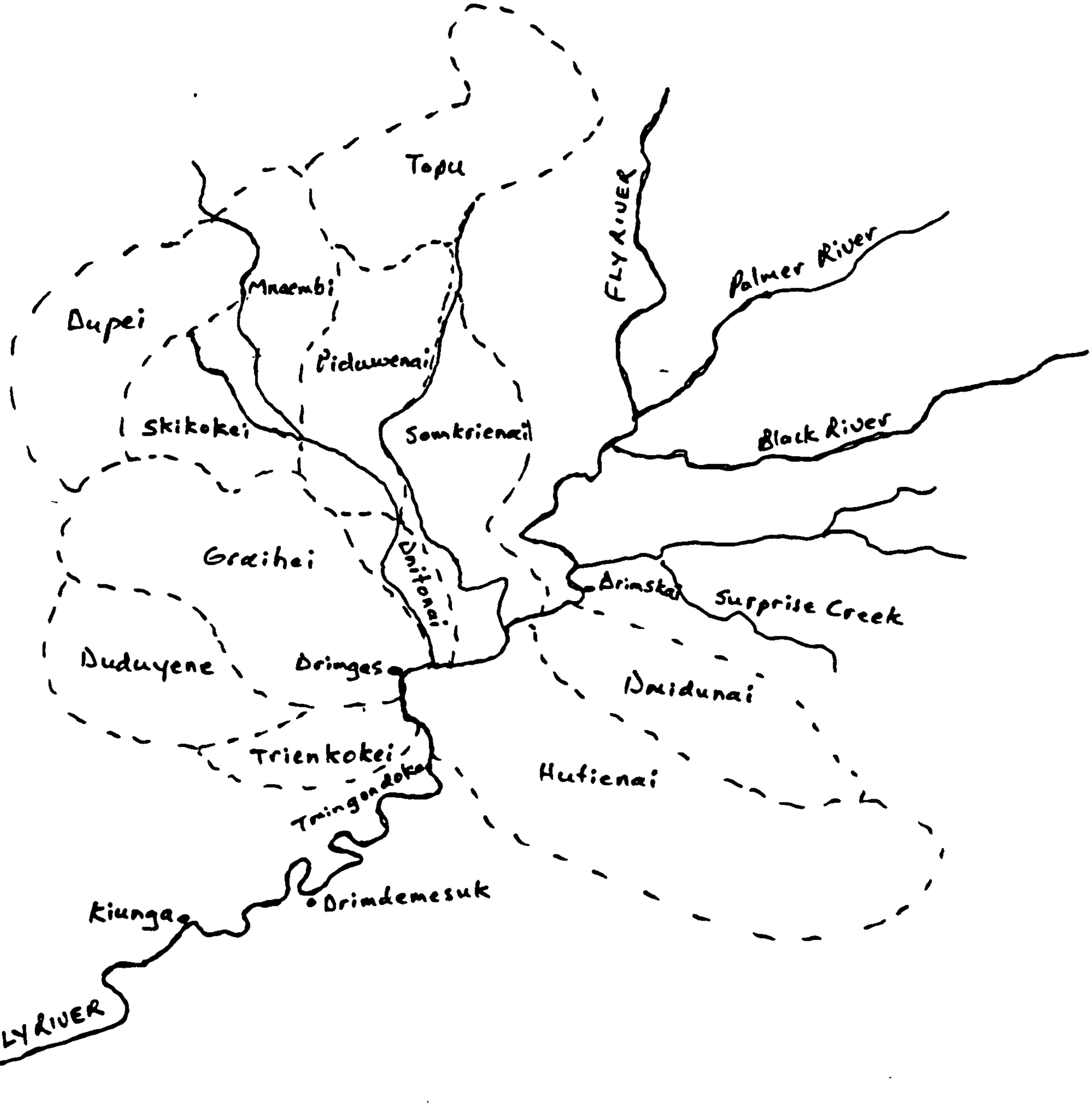
Hamlet Names: General Considerations

Hamlet names (hi) may be known according to any one or all of the following principles, depending on the circumstances of reference: (1) the personal name or names of the owner(s)/builder(s) of the house who are invariably senior male residents and members of the hamlet; (2) the "clan" (tongesu) name of the owner(s)/builder(s); (3) a name that is also used to refer to associated hamlet and/or territory and their boundary markers; (4) "tree names"; and (5) names that connote a specific action relevant to or associated with the construction of a hamlet house.

A detailed discussion of group and personal naming practices among the Aekyom is provided in Chapter 5. It is sufficient to state here that

Map 3

Hamlet Names and Territories



the hamlet house is given one or more personal names, including the first and second names of the principal owner/builder of the house. Hamlets or hamlet houses are also known by the names of the founding "clans" or tongesu. In some cases, this may be a single tongesu name such as Drim, Gre, Demesuke, etc., or the name of a tongesu distinguished by birth order such as Somibinkia ("the youngest or junior Somi tongesu"). More commonly, hamlet/house names refer to relationships between tongesu, e.g., Drimgas, Tmingondok, which are based on variable forms of association, including joint ownership, occupation and exploitation of hamlet houses and lands and/or linked territories, as well as that of marriage.[11] According to Aekyom mythology (song swa) and migration histories (hamasakweila swa), hamlet owners trace their origins to ancestral totemic beings, including animals (pigs, crocodiles), "birds" (cassowaries, cockatoos, hawks), insects (flies), plants (sago, banana, and other trees or tree fruits), and less frequently land forms, particularly mountains. As transformed humans, the ancestors either occupied the territory where their transformation took place or migrated to hamlet territories from their place of origin/transformation which is usually located in territory occupied today by neighbouring or more distant peoples such as the Yonggomand Min. In some cases, the original occupants or owners of hamlets and hamlet territories later welcomed immigrants from different tongesu and either presented them with discrete hamlet lands adjacent to the territory now occupied by the givers of land or established with them joint occupation and ownership of a hamlet and its associated territory. These land transfers and joint hamlet occupation/ownership are always associated with marriage exchange.

The close association between the hamlet site, land or land formations, and totems and other beings, is reflected in the third type of hamlet name. Hamlets are terminologically synonymous with their territories, which are distinguished by a number and variety of boundary markers (koma) or sites that refer to creeks, certain land forms (e.g., ridges, sand bars or banks) natural species and anthropomorphic or supernatural beings. The fourth type of hamlet name denotes the type of tree whose trunk is used as the central foundation post for the house.

These names tend to vary considerably as each newly-built house may rest on a different kind of tree trunk (e.g., yei, bua, gi, etc.). The fifth and last type of hamlet name refers to a particular action that characterizes the clearing of a hamlet site or the building of a hamlet house. For example, Duduyene hamlet means hamlet "where the dudu bird was killed". Similarly, Wiyinai is a reflection of a "place where trees are cut down". As with "tree names" this last type of name may vary each time a new house is built.

Hamlet Membership

The core members of a hamlet are a group of males belonging to the same named tongesu. These males are agnates who can easily trace actual genealogical ties to one another. In cases of jointly owned/occupied hamlets, the core groups of males belong to different named tongesu, respectively. Women usually move to their husband's group after marriage, especially if the husband is also the owner of a hamlet house or its likely successor. Following the birth of children, men recruit their sons and daughters to their tongesu and to membership status in the hamlet. Thus, at the most elementary level, hamlet members include a group (or groups) of agnatically related males, their wives and (dependent) children and, in some cases, their sisters.

Hamlet members may also include other relatives (kin and affinal) who for a variety of reasons may choose to live away from their agnatic or natal group (see below). This may also occur in cases of adoption. Since it was difficult to assess the mortality rate of parents, I am not in a position to state precise adoption rates. Nevertheless, most cases of adoption known to me involved members of the same local tongesu: for example, children are often adopted by the father's brother (FB) on the death of the father, provided the former is of suitable status (i.e., married or widowed). In two recorded cases of adoption involving tongesu of different names, the adopted child shared the tongesu name of the foster father. However, these foster children (harkiarin) do not change their

tongesu names after adoption to coincide with their foster father's unless the adoption has occurred through specific exchange or social networks. But even then, changes in tongesu name may be ambiguous. But in general it would appear that tongesu naming reflects principles of group recruitment and membership characteristic of patrilineal clans (but see Chapter 4).

i) Names and Language: The Tongesu as Nominal Group

The first distinction Aekyom make about the core members of a hamlet is a nominal one: agnatically related males (and females) trace their own identity to a named tongesu. Thus, a man's children always assume the name of his tongesu, and by implication, its totemic representative and affiliations. This relationship to the father and his tongesu is further strengthened by the child taking his or her father's personal first name as a personal second named (see Chapter 5 for details). In the case of an adopted child from a differently named tongesu, the tongesu name is often "adjusted" to correspond to that of the foster father's and the former may assume the foster father's personal first name as his/her personal second name. However, I gathered no evidence that persons "external to" the agnatic core of a hamlet become assimilated to it through protracted residence alone (c.f. Strathern, 1973; Meggitt, 1965).

The term tongesu is used by the Fly River Aekyom to refer to a contemporary or (recent) historical group of agnatically related kin who claim common membership in a local hamlet. When pro jecting the identity of this group to the agnatic past (sempsong mena, "a very long time ago"), the appropriate collective appellation is tei. As expressed by my informants, tei refers to the first "tongesu" or ancestral beginnings of such groups. As far as I know, only tei is used in this context: the closely related term teinam is also used by the Fly River Aekyom as a substitute for tongesu. Although the former term is not as frequently used as the latter, teinam seems far more prevalent among the Alice River Aekyom who do not, to my knowledge, use the term tongesu.

All these terms have complex meanings which will be developed more completely as the discussion unfolds. At this point it will be sufficient to list the range of their denotata as terms and linked morphemes in order to give an indication of the complexity of the issues that lie ahead.

(i) tei: This term has several meanings, some of which are immediately evident. First, tei refers to an ancestral hamlet agnatic group. Secondly, tei is the name given to divisions in the natural world. All livings things – humans (wíkè "people"), animals, birds, fish, insects, trees – are assigned to named tei. For example, snakes belong to the category sine, an association expressed by the phrase "sine ka tei" or, literally, "snakes their tei". Given the totemic nature of human origins, it is not surprising that the Aekyom and the various creatures in their environment should be included within this generic term. Thirdly, tei refers to a specific grouping of animals in the natural world: the "class" of marsupials, rats and bandicoots.

(ii) teinam: As noted above, teinam is used by the Fly River Aekyom as an infrequent substitute for tongesu. Curiously, teinam also denotes the entrance or doorway to the house, either male or female.

(iii) tongesu: This term is perhaps the most difficult to gloss. While its reference to a hamlet agnatic group presents no difficulty, it has no other meanings as a word that the Aekyom consciously express. However, close scrutiny of its constituent morphemes reveals some interesting associations. In the first place, tonge denotes stones or flints that the Aekyom traditionally use to make fire. In Aekyom thought, fire and stones convey the ideas or properties of transformation and immortality, respectively, both of which are religious or spiritual qualities. Tonge is also a component of ditonge, a term that denotes the anus. While this association might seem odd, it is not out of line with Aekyom understandings. For example, fire stones may be understood as "percussive instruments"

and their linguistic connection with the anus is confirmed at the level of mythology: the only other percussive instrument, the drum, is likened to the anus or the human alimentary and reproductive systems in a story that relates the origin of membranophones. More importantly, the morpheme di confirms an association with the general notion of reproduction, a theme not alien to the nature of the tongesu: di refers to the umbilical cord and placenta as well as to a variety of domesticated sago which yields a red starch. Moreover, its link with the idea of a "connection between elements" is expressed in its other usage: it refers to the point where the riverbank (land) and the river (water) meet. In general then, the linguistic environment of tonge conveys the ideas of friction, heat, fire, eating, sexual intercourse, defecation and reproduction, all requiring at least two "elements".

The morpheme su has an immediately recognizable connotation in the context of comparative kinship groups in New Guinea. For example, it denotes the trunk of the sago palm, or any tree. Among the Star Mountains people, "clans" are called kaga-don, meaning "human stem" (Pouwer, 1964: 136). This is very close to the terms and meanings that Welsch (1979) describes for the lowland Ningerum (see below, Chapter 4), neighbours of the Aekyom and Min. Secondly, su has a significant grammatical function. As a present or past participle, su is used when it is desired to convey that an action has been completed before the next action occurs (Rule and Rule, 1970:73). In other words, su provides a linguistic focus on completed action and action that is to follow in the future. It is a common feature of narrative where, for example, naende (meaning "next") becomes naendesu in differentiating action sequences.

There are approximately 100 different tongesu names throughout the Aekyom region. These names may, however, be further distinguished on the basis of both ancestral birth order and its implications for contemporary tongesu, as well as locality. Each local tongesu occupying a specific hamlet is placed into one of three possible age categories or divisions: (1) rankia or "eldest"; (2) duleikia or "middle"; and

(3) binkia or "youngest". According to Aekyom mythology and migration histories, these divisions were created at the time of the first "tongesu" or tei. Interestingly, my informants rarely mentioned a middle term for birth orders that used to identify neighbouring tongesu. Nevertheless, mythology gives the impression that tei have fragmented over time with different "branches" occupying different hamlets. Yet, these apparent fragments or branches do not necessarily acknowledge a common origin despite a shared tongesu name. Furthermore, they often do not share the same ancestral totems. For example, the Gasei tongesu name is universally traced to the gasnai pandanus fruit, a variety domesticated by the Aekyom. But while the local Gasei hamlet agnatic group of present-day Tmingondok village claims this pandanus as their ancestral totem, the Gasei of Drimgas village trace their totemic origins to a variety of sweet potato which in turn differs from the totemic ancestor of the Greingas village Gasei which is the snake. While I perceived an apparent discrepancy in these associations they raised little concern among my informants. They simply acknowledged that the differences exist but did not regard them as problematic, at least outside a mythical context (see Chapters 5 and 6). Indeed, differences in totemic origin do not pose difficulties in relating to members of hamlet agnatic groups who share the same tongesu name. Kin relationships are reckoned through common tongesu names and reflected in the use of (agnatic) kin terms when addressing or referring to one another. This use of kin terms is also applicable to members of differently named local tongesu with whom one has cooperative and fictive kinship links on the basis of geographical proximity. Unless a hamlet is jointly occupied by otherwise distinct tongesu of the same name – e.g., Somi rankia and Somi binkia – locally distinct groups with the same tongesu name have no legitimate claims on one another's territory or its resources. Thus each local group, identified by a tongesu name exploits its own territory and manages its own affairs independently of similarly named groups.

Thus tongesu names refer to territorially dispersed agnatic groups who may share an ancestral group name but share/claim neither unequivocal totemic origins[12] nor the same hamlet territories. Equally

significant, unlike hamlet agnatic groups, the tongesu at the nominal level is not necessarily exogamous. Adjacent or closely situated hamlets whose core agnatic group members share the same tongesu name often intermarry. It should follow then that at the most inclusive level, tongesu are not categories of patrilineal descent, inheritance or succession. A claim to a tongesu name is not sufficient for:

(i) recruitment to a specific localized hamlet group;
(ii) validation of the social prerequisites of property transmission; nor
(iii) legitimation of the acquisition of titular status vis-à-vis property.

However, this is not to say that property relations among the Aekyom are weakly conceptualized or poorly defined. They are clearly articulated through a system of land tenure and rights in property that provide a firm basis for the organization of local (hamlet-based) tongesu as corporate groups and their definition as property-holding units.

Land Tenure, Property Rights and Hamlet Continuity: The Tongesu as Corporate Group

Aekyom relationships to the land provide an important context for any discussion of hamlet continuity over time. While local agnatic groups hold ownership rights in hamlet land and ultimately in its resources, the entire hamlet membership is involved in the allocation of rights in these areas.[13] As a first step, then, it will prove useful to outline the categories and principles of land tenure and rights in property. By contrasting rights associated with land and other types of property, three general categories of property may be distinguished:

(i) the land itself;
(ii) improvements to land; and
(iii) moveable property.

These categories are subject to two types of rights:

(i) ownership; and
(ii) usufruct

which may be held collectively or individually. Full ownership is a

complex of rights which generally includes the right to use property, to offer use rights to others, to limit access to property,[14] to demand compensation for damaged or lost property, and to transfer ownership. However, ownership may be limited in a number of ways (see below). Usufruct is more restrictive than ownership and simply permits the holder of such rights to use property. It is a right of access to property but, like ownership, use rights may be conditional insofar as they must meet certain criteria or standards. Thus they may be limited to certain kinds of use, or limited in other ways.

I. Hamlet Land

The general term for land is to. For the Aekyom, land is of major sociological and economic interest, as it provides a place of residence as well as food and material resources. However, the land is also perceived in terms of a sacred geography created by ritual (e.g., burial ceremonies and male initiation rites), myth (e.g., ancestral origin sites) and other religious representations (e.g., spirit domains). Thus the division of land into named hamlet territories creates the most general categorization which articulates the social, economic and religious value of Aekyom relationships to the land.

(a) Ownership Rights: Property Relations and Social Segregatation

The land encompassed by hamlet territory is collectively owned by the male agnatic core members of the hamlet. Usually the man who is the principal builder of the hamlet house or for whom it is built is the titular owner of the hamlet, its land and its resources. In cases of joint ownership of the hamlet, usually senior married men of two or more agnatic groups are the titular owners.

"Title", as used in this context, means "holding hamlet property in trust for the (relevant) agnatic group" or "managing the group's claims to ownership of hamlet property", and is often expressed by the terms tonai or toaenai.[15] Tonai may be further distinguished in terms of four general

social categories of land owners which include:

(i) aisu or "father's people";

(ii) aemsu or "mother's people";

(iii) puato or "mother's brother's land"; and

(iv) totien wíkè or the land belonging to enemies and people with whom the Aekyom fight."

The acquisition of title to hamlet land is through patrilineal succession within the hamlet's core agnatic group. The successor is often a father's brother or an eldest son (i.e., primogeniture is a significant factor in the acquisition of title). However, succession to titular owner is constrained by certain social and ritual criteria. For example, it is traditionally senior, initiated, married men who successfully claim the title of tonai. In particular, polygamy often enhances the position of a potential successor. A man who has managed to marry several wives and increase alliance relationships with other hamlets may demonstrate a greater capacity to protect further his hamlet's social, economic and political interests. Prior to sustained contact, such strategies had a real potential to create conflicts within the hamlet: competition among agnates for wives sometimes involved the use of lethal sorcery. When this occurred between senior and junior agnates (e.g., between father and son) the "title" of tonai might become temporarily open to succession. However, my informants never expressed the view that titles were also open to competition in this particular way; and there is no convincing evidence that agressive behaviours were intentionally directed towards this end. On a wider scale, inter-hamlet sorcery attacks or warfare were not conducted with the purpose of winning titles to land or promoting territorial expansion. An important factor inhibiting the usurpation of foreign titles and territories was the aggressor's fear of revenge that would ultimately be taken by the spirits of the dead who linger or remain in the territory of those killed.

Title to hamlet land may be transferred to male affines, transactions that are documented in myth and which take place in contemporary Aekyom society.[16] There is no ceremonial accompanying such transfers: the only

prerequisites and conditions of transfer being the existence of an affinal relationship, perhaps combined with a demonstrated need for land. However, title to land cannot be transferred to groups whose members do not possess membership in the owner's hamlet or do not have affinal ties with the owner's agnatic group.

The legitimation or validation of title is premised on both continued occupation of hamlet land by the group in question and demonstration through myth and other categories of oral tradition (e.g., hamasakweilaswa) or instruction of knowledge about the history of the land, its boundaries and particular land marks. Such knowledge is either unknown or incompletely known by other Aekyom belonging to distinct hamlets as well as hamlet members unprepared to assume titular ownership of hamlet property. However, the inability to successfully or fully validate a claim to title does not imply its loss or extinguishment vis-à-vis the agnatic group as a whole. This can only occur under severe demographic circumstances. In cases where all members of the hamlet's core agnatic group have died, the hamlet land may be divided among male affines or adjacent hamlets standing in particular social and economic relationships with the hamlet group prior to its demise. Ownership rights are not assumed automatically by men who simply share the same tongesu name as the deceased owner.

(b) Usufruct Rights

It is rare for a hamlet member to be denied usufruct rights (u) in his/her hamlet land. These are seen by the Aekyom as inalienable rights of hamlet membership. However, it does appear that the ability to assert usufruct rights takes precedence over "rules" of inheritance or inheritance practices within the agnatic group or domestic family.

Individuals who make claims to the right to use hamlet land may do so in one of two ways. First, a claim may be based on a man's or woman's kinship relation to the owner and the transference of the right by him. Alternatively, an individual may seek permission to use land from people

who have demonstrated claims of kinship with the owner. The first type of claim is essentially a form of inheritance. The second is a temporary use right that does not, theoretically, entitle the user to any subsequent rights. In concrete terms, it is identical to one man offering his pandanus harvest but not the fruits of his banana tree to another.

It is an invariable principle in Aekyom society that one must be in a position to use the land in question in order to successfully assert a claim to land use. This requires residence in the relevant hamlet at least during the period of land use. In some cases, internal squabbles may force hamlet members from resident status and they then forfeit their ability to assert a claim to use the land. Thus, hamlet membership, in part, relies on successful assertion of these usufruct rights, which presupposes a certain degree or strength of assertion.

Alternatively, if a man's children do not survive him or if they emigrate to another hamlet, then other relatives or members within the hamlet may assert claims to use this vacant land. While non-resident kin do not immediately lose the right to use land, they often lack the ability to successfuly assert their rights. After several generations, their claims to use the land will have disappeared along with the knowledge of how they might be successfully advanced.

Although women may assert use rights in land virilocal residence may place them at a considerable distance from their natal hamlets and assertions to use such land may be tenuous, especially over a long period of time. However, in most cases, a woman periodically returns to her natal hamlet accompanied by her husband in order to assist him in the economic and social tasks that form part of the obligations between affines in general, and between a wife's father and daughter's husband, in particular. In such cases, residence with the wife's father is temporary: the daughter's husband assumes the right to use his wife's father's hamlet land for gardening, gathering, fishing or hunting. In other situations, the daughter's husband may became a permanent resident and member of his wife's father's hamlet. Where the natal hamlets of these two men are

distinct, the former forfeits his ability to assert usufruct rights or succeed to titular ownership in his natal hamlet.

II. Improvements to Land

Improvements to land may be either collectively or individually owned, depending on the nature of the improvement. Traditionally, land could be improved in three major ways:

(i) clearing primary forest;
(ii) building houses and shelters; and
(iii) making/planting gardens.

Only the clearing of forests is a permanent improvement. Gardens are not usable after repeated harvesting since the garden site reverts to secondary forest in a few years. Houses and shelters also have a limited life-span: they are used for about five years, then abandoned as they begin to rot.[17] Thus abandoned hamlet sites — houses and gardens — are common throughout the area. Tree crops, on the other hand, have a somewhat longer useful life but usually not exceeding a generation.

Houses and shelters are the exclusive property of their builders. Rights to use a house are given to all hamlet members. It is not uncommon for travellers today to use a vacant house without permission, but this is a result of generosity and kinship obligations/rights that characterize much of Aekyom society. As long as the house stands, its owners continue to have full ownership rights over it and the land on which it sits. As stated above, ownership of the house passes to a resident agnatic on the death of its owner.

Once planted, a vegetable garden and its produce belong to whomever planted it. Usually, one or more families clear the bush, prepare the soil (although this is minimal) and plant the crops. There is no strict division of labour in the planting of vegetable gardens nor in its harvest, an observation that contrasts with the division of labour among

Table 9

Aekyom Dwellings and Spatial Relationships by Sex, Age and Social Status

Dwelling Type/Space	Status	Description
alamene aewe (hamlet house)	major residential unit occupied by married men and women, their children and other relatives	Elevated 6' to 20' or more above the ground; located on hamlet site
kwaten knu aewe (bachelors' house)	Living quarters reserved exclusively for bachelors	Elevated 80' to 100' above the ground; located beyond the immediate hamlet site
slewe (menstrual hut, hunting house)	Temporary shelter used exclusively by pregnant women or temporary house used mainly by men	Ground level; located in the deep bush
kia duweden aewe (birth hut)	Temporary shelter used by pregnant women	Ground level; located in the deep bush
irine	Female division of the hamlet house	Separated from male divisions by a partition (irine) and entered, traditionally, from beneath the house
utio	Male division of the hamlet house	Separated from the female division by a partition (irine) and entered, traditionally, from either beneath the house or in front of the house
ambine	Old men's (wìké) quarters in the hamlet house	Elevated 1.5' above utio floor, and entered via utio
kwaten knuai	Bachelor's loft in the hamlet house	Elevated several feet above the utio floor, and entered via utio
komenai	Male initiation house	Ground level; located in the deep bush

some Min groups (e.g., Barth, 1975, 1982). However, if separate families cooperate in gardening, each will have its own section(s) of the garden. Within each family, in turn, sections of the garden plot will be the responsiblity of each member. In principle, if an individual plants a garden, he or she alone has the right to harvest the crops. But families usually make their gardens together and jointly own the harvest.

Once planted, a vegetable garden site will remain fertile for up to five years. After this time the site is abandoned. In contrast, sago gardens may be replanted over much longer periods of time but it usually takes 15 years for a palm to mature and yield edible starch. Yet even when there are no more stands, the sago garden has "continuous" utility: it is a key site for hunting wild pigs and bandicoots, and gathering sago grubs and okari nuts. Thus, unlike spent vegetable gardens, sago sites are jealously guarded and protected from the encroachment of other people.

In general, harvested vegetables are the property of the harvester. There are no special rules that dictate the timing of the harvest: the only constraint is their seasonal availability. Once gathered, the food can be cooked and eaten, briefly stored, or given as gifts as the owner sees fit or is compelled for social reasons. The owner may also transfer the right to harvest the garden crops to kin, affines or "friends".

Tree crops such as sago, pandanus, okari nut, breadfruit and bananas have the most typical exclusive rights of individual ownership of any non-moveable property. Trees are frequently owned separately from land. And ownership of the land where trees are growing does not influence ownership rights over the trees in any way. Most economic trees are individually planted and, like other vegetable crops, belong to the individual planter. Rights of ownership over both the trees and the fruits or nuts they bear are full. An owner may transfer rights to a year's breadfuit or pandanus harvest, for example, without adversely affecting his ownership of the tree or its produce in subsequent years. Like individually owned personal or moveable property, an owner may bequeath his trees to others. For example, a man's wife and children may inherit

his trees on an individual basis. At other times, his trees will be jointly inherited by the surviving family members or hamlet agnates. The deciding factors in this context usually rest on the strength of kin and affinal ties, economic necessity or residence. For example, since daughters are expected to marry, and often move to another hamlet, they may not live close enough to their natal hamlet to exploit the trees on a regular basis. For this reason, women do not often automatically inherit economic trees from their fathers. If a man has no surviving sons, his brothers or brother's sons will inherit the trees directly, and therefore pass over the daughters. Full brothers (i.e., sons of the same father and mother) half-brothers (i.e., sons of the same father but different mothers) and co-resident foster brothers all have equal standing vis-à-vis inheritance, although personal factors may enter into a man's decision to leave his trees to a specific heir. But members of tongesu who share the same name as the owner and who claim putative agnatic ties — i.e., ties not demonstrated but assumed — would not normally be able to inherit trees.

Widows rarely stand to benefit directly from the inheritance of trees (or land). If she is young, a widow will often re-marry and move to her husband's hamlet and exploit his trees. Should a widow marry her deceased husband's brother or an older widow remain in her deceased husband's household, they will help harvest the same trees as before even though they do not own any of their deceased husband's trees.

Where hamlets are jointly owned by different named local tongesu, there is formal partitioning of territorial lands. However, individually owned trees and vegetable gardens may be scattered throughout the territory, regardless of the hamlet territorial section in which they may be growing.

III. Moveable Property

As among other Papua New Guinea societies, the Aekyom recognize individual ownership of moveable or personal property. As Table 10 shows, full ownership of certain items is gender specific, while other categories of property may be owned by either males or females.

Men and women may transfer ownership and offer use rights in personal property whenever and to whomever they please. The latter often occurs in the form of lending, which may sometimes be obligatory as a matter of social propriety. Because the Aekyom emphasize principles of generosity, reciprocity and kinship, relatives and friends often use each other's personal property as if it belonged to the non-owner. However, I recorded only one case of borrowing in which the owner's permission had not first been granted.[18] Those who are granted use rights in personal property are responsible for damages to or loss of the item when it is in their possession. In either case some form of compensation to the owner is expected: this usually involves replacement of the item or, where possible, a cash settlement.

Ideally, ownership rights in personal property are transferable at will through gift giving, trade, or repayment of debts. While relatives of a property owner may object to a transfer of property and may exercise their influence to stop the transfer, the right to transfer property ultimately lies with the owner. Personal property is also transferable through inheritance and property may be promised to potential heirs before the death of the owner. There are no strict rules of intestate inheritance and close agnatic relatives will usually decide how the property is to be distributed. Sons, daughters, wives and siblings most frequently receive most of a man's personal property, but other relatives are not necessarily restricted from inheritance. Similarly, members of a woman's family will often receive her personal property while other relatives are not necessarily excluded. Some personal property is buried with the deceased. For men, these include bows, arrows and the penis case. For women, it includes grass skirts.

Table 10.

Ownership of
Personal Property by Sex

PROPERTY ITEM:	Male	Female
	bow	string bags
	arrow	sago bags
	canoe	dancing regalia
	musical instruments (drums, rattles, etc.)	skirts
	fish traps	cooking utensils
	dogs, dog's teeth	pigs
	pigs	dog's teeth
	string bags	
	penis case	
	dancing regalia	
	axes	

In general, most Aekyom have such limited amounts of personal property that inheritance and distribution of property following an individual's death are not issues of major social or symbolic significance. There is, however, a notable exception. The inheritance of dog's teeth, or dog's teeth necklaces always involves female kin categories either directly or indirectly. These may be passed on by a father to his daughter's son or by a mother to her son or daughter. In no instances do sons inherit dog's teeth from their fathers. But they may pass between a mother's brother and a sister's son or between a mother's father and a daughter's son.

The range of Aekyom property rights may be conveniently summarized in Table 11.

The Hamlet and Economic Organization

The Aekyom assertion that hamlet members use a territory in common is partly a reflection of economic life and partly an ideological statement that close cooperation should occur within the hamlet membership. At the level of subsistence production, cooperative ties among hamlet members imply self-sufficiency for the hamlet. The key to hamlet self-sufficiency may be traced to the minimal or basic unit of economic production, the domestic family (gile) consisting of a man, his wife (or wives) and their children. For many everyday activities, the family itself is a self-sufficient unit. However, it often combines with one or more like units when economic tasks are especially demanding such as the clearing of land for house and garden sites, the production of sago or fishing. Thus the scale of economic activity dictates the nature of the social relations comprising labour units.

In general, the division of labour is based on complementary sex-specific tasks. As my informants put it, "men provide meat and women supply sago". These cultural definitions of the economic roles of men and women have interesting social implications: male specialization in hunting presupposes individual activity in contrast to women's production of sago

Table 11.

Aekyom Property Rights

Type of Property	Nature of Rights	Legitimation	Form of Ownership /Use Rights	Status of Owner/User
1. Hamlet land	ownership	Residence, "historical and geographic knowledge; kinship	Collective, joint	tongesu
	usufruct	Residence, kinship affinity, "bush association"	Individual	Individual
2. Houses/shelters	ownership	Construction, occupation	Individual	Individual
	usufruct	Residence	Individual	Individual
3. Garden produce	ownership	Planting, cultivation	Joint, Individual	Family, Individual
4. Economic trees	ownership	Planting, inheritance	Individual	Individual
	usufruct	Kinship	Individual	Individual
5. Personal property	ownership	Possession	Individual	Individual
	usufruct	Transference, inheritance	Individual	Individual
6. Hunting, gathering and fishing grounds	usufruct	Residence	Individual	Individual

which is invariably a collective enterprise. However, sago production does not exclude males from participation in the process as husbands (and sometimes younger sons) assist the women at certain stages of production[19] (see Chapter 2 for details).

In other economic situations, men and women engage in cooperative, parallel tasks. This is especially the case for small-scale economic activity such as the clearing, planting and harvesting of smaller garden plots, the gathering of fruits, nuts, and tree grubs or (today) sojourns to the market in Kiunga. Here the family provides the social context for cooperative tasks.

A man, his wife (or wives) and children (including bachelors) will prepare a garden plot which is divided into sections for various members of the family. While the planting of crops is not specific to any sex or age category, men are ultimatley responsible for the garden's fecundity as they control garden magic (hu) specific to each type of crop. Otherwise, minimal attention is given to the germinating plants, although women may sometimes clear weeds from more densely infested areas. When the crops have matured, they are harvested by the family members together. (Although crops are owned by the owner of each section of the garden, the produce is harvested collectively.) The gathering of forest products such as pandanus fruit, okari nut and breadfruit may also be a family activity or sometimes that of an individual. All sex and age categories will gather any category of food as there are no general social restrictions on which foods may be gathered.

Common interests in a garden site is an important factor in the combination of domestic units and is usually predicated on economic production of a much larger scale. Thus, several families might cooperate, depending on the size of the garden, its location, and the time of clearing. Cooperating domestic units are most frequently bound together on the basis of affinal ties or ties between cross-cousins. Much less frequently, brothers of the same localized tongesu will join their respective families together for the productive task. Thus, cross-sex

sibling relations across adjacent generations and the relations between brothers-in-law are far more significant than same-sex sibling relations in defining labour units for the production of the Aekyom staple food, sago. The cross-sex sibling relationship has also been noted by Pouwer (1964:141) for groups of the Star Mountains (Min) as a theme relevant to the creation of productive cooperative relationships (see also Gell, 1975). Indeed, brothers-in-law or cross-cousins often share sago garden sites, although they indvidually own sago palms they have themselves planted/cultivated if domestic, or claimed, if wild. However, they will assist or be obligated to assist one another, together with their respective families, in the harvesting of the palm.

Inter-Hamlet Relations: Politics and Warfare

The Security Circle

Where individual hamlets are endogamous or when affinal relatives choose to reside in the same hamlet following a marriage, the hamlet is virtually economically and socially self-sufficient. However, as a counter-balance to the defensive weakness imposed by demographically small and geographically dispersed settlements, hamlet members were traditionally drawn into an extensive network of social and political ties which linked them to members of adjacent and more distant hamlets. This overall network involved individual hamlets in a "security circle" (Pouwer, 1964:135) of neighbouring hamlets which they could often count on in times of need — e.g., protection against raids, economic scarcity and other levels of group and individual cooperation.

Such security circles[20] were not regional organizations which united Aekyom people at more inclusive political levels.[21] The bonds which comprised any hamlet's security circle only partially coincided with those of other hamlets. As a result, hamlet security circles do not define a centralized political unit but rather a set of inter-group bonds which overlap those of other hamlets.

Hamlet security circles may be formed in one of two possible ways.

The first I shall call "bush associations" after Gell (1975:45-46). Aekyom property rights have an important bearing on the formation and maintenance of "bush associations" and the status of "bush associates".[22] For example, rights in the use of hamlet hunting, gathering and fishing grounds (listed in Table 11) extend throughout the hamlet's territory. Hamlet gathering and fishing grounds are for the common use of its members. Hunting grounds, however, are usually somewhat more specific vis-à-vis usufruct. Individual hunters tend to hunt in circumscribed areas which may also be used by a hunter's son(s), cross-cousin or male affine. All grounds are jealously guarded against trespass and the illegal use of hamlet hunting, gathering or fishing grounds leads invariably to disputes or in some cases to more pronounced hostilities and armed conflict. However, the legal use of a hamlet's hunting, gathering or fishing grounds is not necessarily confined or limited to its membership. In many cases, two or more different hamlets enjoy usufruct rights in one another's resource grounds. To a lesser extent, such rights in property are also extended to the exploitation of economic trees.

Thus, "bush associations" are established on the basis of property relations. Significantly, mutual usufruct rights in resources circumscribed by (usually) adjacent or neighbouring hamlet territories can lead to mutual aid networks that also function as security circles. More importantly, both may be consolidated by the use of relationship terms (e.g. "brother", "sister") that may be applied equally to "bush associates" and members of one's tongesu (i.e., a hamlet's core agnatic group) even when they do not share the same tongesu name.[23]

Given the exogamy of localized tongesu, this use of relationship terms suggests that "bush asosciations" are not formed on the basis of marriage exchanges and are distinct from security circles that are so formed. Both field observations and informants statements bear this out (see also Gell, 1975:45-47). Security circles that are managed in a kinship idiom differ, in terms of their social constitution, from those that are based on marriage alliances. Most marriages are contracted between adjacent hamlets and within hamlets. In terms of defense, as well as

subsistence, such marriages are as undeniably advantageous as they are likely to be stable. They tend to create a security circle of affinal relatives within or surrounding a hamlet which reduces the danger of being raided by enemy groups. It also makes access to both a husband's and wife's resources possible, especially when their natal hamlet territories are near to one another. Geographical proximity also helps to ensure that affinal ties will be maintained and repeated and offers residential options should misfortune or conflicts arise.

Within a hamlet, members try to settle disputes without bloodshed, although fighting, wounding and homicide do occur. In the event of transgressions or property violations, compensation, restitution and general reconciliation are the norm and usual practice. Domestic disputes between husband and wife may lead to physicial violence, though rarely serious. A notable exception concerns the issue of adultery, in which case the offended husband could kill either or both his wife or the male offender. The wife, on the other hand, might leave her husband, returning to her natal hamlet if he is guilty of adultery. Or if she is the guilty party, she may reside with her lover and/or marry him. Most domestic disputes, however, involve minor matters and do not pose a threat to peace and harmony within the hamlet.

Inter-Hamlet Warfare

Outside the hamlet and its associated security circles relations were almost invariably hostile.[24] The existence of restricted spheres of cordiality prior to sustained contact and the suppression of warfare by the Australian colonial administration is confirmed — though perhaps slightly exaggerated — by patrol officers. For example, a patrol report of the mid 1950s states:

> Up until recently people moved within a very circumscribed area of [tongesu] and in-law relatives. Outside this was enemy territory, to be entered only as a raiding party . To enter alone was to invite sudden demise, an invitation that was seldom refused (Patrol Reports, 1955, Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga).[25]

According to my informants, the greatest threat to the Fly River Aekyom were other Aekyom groups of the area. Although encounters with Yonggom and Pare groups seem to have been less frequent, they were equally violent.

In general, hostilities between hamlet groups might be triggered by infractions of social or legal codes, as well as suspicions and accusations of sorcery. The most serious acts included the unlawful appropriation of hamlet resources (especially animals and vegetable products, and in particular, highly coveted domestic pigs), non-reciprocation of marriage gifts and the maltreatment of spouses, physically and verbally. However, because of its almost invariable association with sickness and death, allegations of sorcery most frequently called men to arms.

Mobilization for war(saitenkala or "time of war") was initiated by the (aggrieved) hamlet. One or two hamlet members would attempt to rally support for its cause among neighbouring affines and "bush asosciates" either through skillful rhetoric or, more commonly, by appealing to a sense of collective obligation in maintaining the hamlets' security circle.[26] In general, warriors (twali) were recruited from the ranks of bachelors (kwaten knu) with the added participation of married men (knu alamena). The war party, consisting of 15 to 25 men, was always ritually prepared by one or two senior men (wìké) who performed magical rites that addressed the warriors' condition and the purpose of their acts. As a sin qua non of war readiness it communicated to the warrior a power to render the enemy unconscious so that he might be immediately dispatched. The steps in the rite were described to me as follows:

(i) insects called gipopopokei that make their burrows in the ground beneath the hamlet house are collected;

(ii) a small black bird known as tiyongei is killed and its feathers removed;

(iii) the bird feathers, together with the insects, are burned in the hamlet house fireplace and the ashes collected; then

(iv) the ashes (ti) are cupped in the magician's (humena) hands and then blown by him throughout the house where all the warriors have

gathered; and finally

(v) a pig is killed, its meat ritually offered to the warriors' dead ancestors and relatives (wíkè dulei) as a supplication for guidance during the conflict.

As a complement to the rite, the warriors decorated their bodies in standardized patterns. First, the entire body was covered with bush materials, especially with the leaves of the gungun tree which made the body fetid. Then the black (tail) feathers of the cassowary were draped over the warrior's back.[27] In addition, certain weapons of war were also decorated. For example, the shoot of the sawei plant was tied to the war mallet called bro, a practice which, according to my informants, was intended to frighten the enemy.[28] Finally, warriors often wore cane armour or cuirasses that, while protecting the chest and back from the impact of enemy arrows, left the legs and head vulnerable to injury.

The aim of the war party was to commit a homicide in retaliation for an injury or death, either real or perceived, suffered by a member of the hamlet at the "hands" of the enemy. It seems that Aekyom warfare had no ecnomic or major political rationale, a suggestion consistent with the acts and consequences of war.

The actual fighting (twali tila) was conducted either at night or during the day, depending on the particular strategy followed and often took advantage of the element of surprise. In some cases, the aggressor might stage an ambush, especially near the enemy's sago gardens or along trails leading to and from their hamlet. At other times, the enemy's house(s) would be encircled usually at night, its occupants killed, and then burned to the ground. More rarely, confrontation on the "battlefield" took place. These were usually pre-arranged by the warring parties and involved ritual display. Such an encounter with the Yonggom prior to the suppresion of warfare by the government was vividly recalled by my informants. Dmape of Drimgas village explained that:

> before the Australians came and stopped the fighting we (i.e., members of the Drim tongesu) sometimes married Yonggom women. One time a Drim man married

> a Yonggom woman and they lived together in Graihei (Drim territory). Not long after they were married, she died and her relatives ("people", wíkè) accused the Drim people of neglect and sorcery. So the Yonggom men came to fight the Drim. They walked (from their hamlets) for a long time but finally they came to Graihei. One of them stepped forward and was wearing cassowary feathers on his body, and he held bird of paradise feathers in his hands and in his mouth. He started to jump up and down (i.e., dance); he was trying to be like a spirit (tona). But the Drim knew what he was doing; we used to do that too. So we just shot arrows at him. After that the rest of the Yonggom warriors came forward and started to shoot arrows at the Drim. But our wìké (senior man, elders) came foward wearing a tree bark mask with animals, birds and spirits painted on it. When the Yonggom saw this they became frightened and ran away.

Upon further questioning, it became apparent that the supernatural powers possessed by the Drim were brought out for display in the form of the mask.[29] While a number of Yonggom may have escaped the battle scene, it is clear that some were killed. According to several informants, the enemy dead were carried back to the Drim hamlet, where they were subsequently butchered and eaten.

There is neither hesitation nor shame (hukwai dela) associated with Aekyom responses to questions about cannibalism among them or their neighbours. Nor did they accuse their neighbours of being especially voracious cannibals, a finding in other Papua New Guinea and world societies that is often more indicative of principles of group differentiation than a reflection of actual fact (Arens, 1979; Jackson, 1982:17). Rather, it was taken for granted that one's enemies were eaten by certain categories of Aekyom people and that other people did likewise.[30] Similarly, "recipes" for cooking human flesh (wíkè saio) were told to me nonchalantly.[31] Thus, human flesh was considered by the Aekyom to be one of the spoils of war. There were no restrictions on the sex or age of the victim to be eaten; therefore men, women or children might be killed and later eaten. However, certain social categories of people could be neither killed (at least intentionally) nor eaten. These include all individuals who share the same tongesu name as the warrior as

well as close maternal relatives. Furthermore, certain age, sex, social and ritual categories were prohibited from eating certain categories of human flesh: these included children, unmarried females, uninitiated males, old men (wìké) and old women (ali).

Interestingly, during homicidal raids, neither the enemy's pigs nor dogs were intentionally killed; nor were gardens destroyed or land seized. At times "prisoners" were also taken, usually women who were later married by their captors. However, such marriages were inevitably unstable since these wives were the first to be suspected of practising sorcery when death and "inexplicable" injury occurred among hamlet members. As a result, these female foreigners were often killed.

Warriors who had killed an enemy took certain ritual "precautions" commensurate with their new status as a successful homicide: the warrior's body and face were painted black with a mixture of charcoal (u) and pig fat (parine) and this was not removed for several months. During this period, the warrior abstained from committing further acts of war. Warriors killed by an enemy and whose bodies were recovered by comrades received no special ritual attention beyond that given the death of hamlet members under other circumstances. The body was buried underground beneath the hamlet house following the mortuary rites (see Chapter 4).

Retaliation by the victim's hamlet was always expected and I was told that this might escalate the conflict in a least two ways: by either involving more people and hamlets as allies and therefore increasing the range and number of people that might be killed or by creating a vendetta. Since compensation for a homicide with payments of pigs or valuables was usually out of the question, especially between distant and/or unrelated combatants, the warring factions relied on a ritual mechanism to suspend if not terminate hostilities. A pandanus feast or peace-making ceremony (aekum humnta) was given, usually by the party that had initiated the killings. Large quantities of red pandanus fruit (ko) were gathered then processed with water to yield a "blood-like" mixture [32] of pandanus juice (ko dolei). At the same time large quantities of sago were prepared.

When the food was ready for consumption, an intermediary was sent to notify the "guests" of the imminent ceremony. Arriving at the hosts' hamlet, the "guests" entered the utio of the house where their hosts were standing in line, holding pieces of sago, topped with pandanus juice, in their hands. The "guests" then approached these men who offered them sago and pandanus juice to eat. At the same time, the hosts ate their share of the ceremonial meal. In this manner, peace between previously warring factions might be maintained for two or three years. But violations of the peace were always a possiblity which shattered or threatened to shatter an already fragile truce.

An Ethnographic Example: Drimgas Village and its Associated Hamlets

Having described the general features of hamlet organization in Aekyom society, I now turn to a detailed consideration of a particular case, namely the population concentrated in Drimgas village. In this section I examine aspects of hamlet ownership and residence patterns. A more detailed discussion of Aekyom marriage and social classification, naming and symbolic classification, is reserved for Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

It is crucial at the outset to distinguish between "Drimgas" as a hamlet prior to sustained contact and administrative changes in Aekyom settlement patterns , and "Drimgas" as a contemporary village, created under the influence of the Australian colonial administration and maintained by the current provincial administration. The term "Drimgas" came into use among the Fly River Aekyom as a result of totemic transformations, migrations and settlement patterns recorded in Aekyom mythology and history. Prior to sustained European contact and influence, "Drimgas" referred to a particular association between two hamlets, formed on the basis of marriage exchange and the tranfser of title to land. According to Aekyom mythology, the Drim tongesu originally occupied and owned the land in question. These first or ancestral Drim occupied Tumenai hamlet, where they later encountered and intermarried

with three other migrant tongesu, the Gasei, Gre and Dua. During this time the Drim transferred ownership rights in land to members of the Gasei tongesu. The Gasei established a house site adjacent to Tumenai and controlled a distinct hamlet territory. The Dua tongesu, on the other hand, claimed ownership rights in unoccupied land on the opposite side (east bank) of the Fly River. The Gre tongesu too apparently claimed ownership rights in unoccupied land adjacent to Drim land on the west bank of the Fly River.

Tumenai[33] is an actual hamlet site in Drim territory abandoned by its membership some thirty years ago. By 1954, Tumenai, or what patrol officers had recorded as Drimgas[34] (hamlet), was abandoned, the hamlet members retiring to dispersed sago garden shelters until 1956, when the colonial administration began to institute centralized villages.[35] Shortly thereafter, members of several neighbouring hamlets, together with the members of the former hamlet at Tumenai, settled in the centralized village of Waiyenai ("place where trees are cut down"). Also known as Drimgas, this village was then resettled eastward until it occupied its present site on the west bank of the Fly River by the mid-1970s.

Aekyom refer to contemporary, centralized villages as hanua, a term borrowed from the Motuan trade language. Hanua is not used to describe traditional hamlet sites. Nor is it spontaneously used to describe the village the Aekyom now inhabit: they prefer to use the name Drimgas when refering to their village of residence. Generally speaking, all Aekyom village names are names of traditional hamlets or traditional hamlet associations, derived from tongesu names.

Today, Drimgas village draws together approximately 188 people who consider themselves to be a collectivity relative to other Aekyom village populations since they speak the same dialect (Fly River Aekyom), frequently inter-marry, exploit neighbouring hamlet territories and cooperate, at the village level, in economic, political and social activities and events.[36] However, despite their mutual occupation of a centralized village, relations defined at the hamlet level are more fundamental to the

organization of groups and the regulation of social life.

This is expressed, in the most concrete terms, by the spatial distribution of village houses. Map No. 4 shows the plan of Drimgas village while Table 12 provides a summary of house ownership, listing the number of discrete hamlets claiming tongesu names and the number of houses their members own.

Generally speaking, houses tend to be grouped together according to common membership in a hamlet/hamlet territory or on the basis of "bush associations". Such contingencies as the time of building a house, the nature of the terrain or the availability of a house site account for a less than perfect distributional pattern. The social context of the existing pattern of house distribution as an expression of traditional hamlet organization requires further detailed comment.

Members of distinct hamlets associated with Drimgas village have ownership and/or usufruct rights in a hamlet territory. In eight (8) cases, hamlet territory is owned by a single, localized tongesu. In two (2) cases, hamlet territory is jointly owned by two localized tongesu with different names. Table 13 lists each hamlet territory by name together with the tongesu name of its owner(s). The latter are further distinguished by their mythologically or historically defined ownership status: that is to say, according to orgin and migration stories as well as informants' statements, owners of hamlet territories are either the original founders of the territories they now own or the recipients of ownership rights in land transferred by an original founder/owner. Where necessary, subscripts serve to identify discrete localized tongesu which also share the same tongesu name.

All hamlet members exercise use rights in their respective territories. The members of certain hamlets may also be granted limited usufruct rights to the territorial resources of neighbouring hamlets. these relations I have referred to as "bush associations", since mutual resource exploitation in terms of them are us ually limited to the deep

MAP 4.

DRIMGAS VILLAGE PLAN

Scale : 1" = 100'

Table 12.

House Ownership by Hamlet and Tongesu, Drimgas Village, 1981-82

No. of Hamlets	Tongesu Name	No. of Houses Owned
1	Drim	5
3	Gre	4
2	Gasei	5
1	Gondoke	1
2	Demesuke	4
2	Somi	2
1	Mia	1
1	Bike	1
1	Ihene	1
Totals: 10		24

Table 13.

Hamlet Territories and Their Ownership Status*

Name of Hamlet Territory	Original Founder	Recipient of Ownership Rights
1. Graihei	Drim	
2. Dnitonai	(Drim)	Gasei
3. Piduwenai	Gre_1	
4. Duduyene	Gre_3	$Demesuke_2$, $Somi_2$
5. Skikokei	Gre_2	
6. Trienkokei	$Somi_1$	$Gasei_2$
7. Dupei	$Demesuke_1$	
8. Mnaembi	Gondoke	
9. Hutienai	Dua	
10. Topu	Ihene	

* A bracket ( ) indicates transference of ownership rights in land and, by implication, extinguishment of title to land. During my fieldwork, most members of the Dua tongesu had settled in Drimgas "corner", Kiunga, where they had built a single house. However, they frequented Drimgas village and exercised their rights of ownership and usufruct in their hamlet territory (Hutienai).

bush/jungle. However, they do not include (prime) sago gardens or vegetable gardens. The pattern of "bush associations" among the residents of Drimgas village is shown in Table 14.

Map No.3 puts these associations into perspective by showing the relative positions of hamlet territories owned and used by residents of Drimgas village.

As a form of social organization based on territorial propinquity and property relations, "bush associations" are also oriented towards mutual support in economic activities such as building canoes and constructing fish weirs. At other times, bush associates may pay one another social visits, exchange raw and cooked food or trade in various valuables. The Drimgas population conceptualizes these associations in a kin ship idiom referring to and addressing their bush associates as "brothers and sisters". However, when used in this context, there is an implicit qualification of these relationship terms. As my informants pointed out, bush associates are tongesu antei ("of a different tongesu") in contrast to agnates who are tongesu trusa ("of one tongesu only"). This distinction is reinforced by the fact that bush asosciates occupy separate hamlets. But my data also show that bush associations may cross-cut affinal ties between hamlets, despite the Aekyom ideology that bush asosciates do not inter-marry. Thus "bush brothers and sisters" may be converted into spouses and in-laws. If this should happen, men and women have the option of residing in a neighbouring hamlet as one of its members. Whether this option is exercised or not depends on a variety of social and demographic contingencies in conjunction with the principles and conditions of marriage exchange.

It should be made clear at this point that bush association is not a pre-condition of marriage, especially as a long term precondition. Affinal relationship established between hamlets on this basis are contingent and invariably impermanent. Enduring affinal relations between hamlets or within a single hamlet are grounded in other cultural principles that are reflected in social and symbolic classification, mythology and ritual.

Table 14.

Bush Associations,

Drimgas Village

Name of Hamlet Territory	Tongesu Name of Bush Associates
1. Graihei	$Demesuke_2$, $Somi_1$, $Gasei_2$
2. Dnitonai	(no bush associates)
3. Piduwenai	Gondoke, Ihene
4. Duduyene	Gre_2
5. Skikokei	$Somi_2$
6. Trienkokei	Drim
7. Dupei	Gondoke
8. Topu	Gre_1, Gondoke
9. Mnaembi	Gre_1, Ihene
10. Hutienai	Bike, Ihene

To a considerable extent the independence of affinal relations from bush associations are also reflected in residence patterns. Unlike bush associates, male affines, for example may and often do occupy the same hamlet as members. Therefore, they may also posses ownership and/or usufruct rights in all lands and property circumscribed by hamlet boundaries. In contrast, bush associates do not posess ownership rights in one another's hamlet lands (or houses) and the scope of their usufruct rights is much narrower. Table 15 provides detailed information on the social composition of hamlets (i.e., hamlet houses) owned and occupied by the residents of Drimgas village. A comparison of a summary of Table 15.a (presented as Table 15.b) with Table 14 provides evidential support for the distinctions drawn above between bush associations and affinal relations.

It may be concluded that in general, bush associates and affinal relatives are distinct. But there are some exceptions. Although members of Piduwenai hamlet and the Mnaembi Gondok are bush associates, at least one marriage has taken place between them. However, this event is relatively insignificant, given the overall pattern of marriages among the hamlets which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Table 15 also shows that immigration from hamlets outside security circles among Drimgas village – associated hamlets has taken place. A member of the Tentu hamlet, listed as Somi $_3$ in Table 15.b, lives uxorilocally in his WB's house (Map 4, No. 11 house). However, this is perhaps not surprising, given the proximity of Tentu and Dupei territories. What is not evident from Table 15 is the fact that certain hamlets, whose members are residents of Drimgas village, stand in alliance relationships or form bush associations with hamlets whose members reside in other centralized villages. These latter hamlets include Somkrienai (owned by members of the Somi tongesu who live primarily in Tnupensomi village) which borders Piduwenai and Dintonai territories, as well as Tmin hamlets associated with Tmingondok village, which lies to the immediate south of Trienkokei territory. Thus, bush associations and affinal relations ramify beyond the security circle of hamlets associated with

Table 15.a.

Hamlet Compositions by House, Drimgas Village, 1981-1982*

House No.	Hamlet Territory	Owner's Tongesu	Resident Agnates	Resident Affines	Affines' Tongesu
1.	Dupei	Demesuke$_1$	B(5), Z, S(2) D, BD(3), FBSD	W, BW(5), ZH, ZS(3) ZD(2)	Gas$_2$ Somi$_1$
2.	Mnaembi	Gondoke	B, S, BS(2), BD	W, BW	Somi$_1$ Demesuke$_1$
3.	Piduwenai	Gre$_1$	D	W	Somi$_1$
4.	Dnitonai	Gas$_1$		W, WB, WZ	Gre$_1$
5.	Piduwenai	Gre$_1$	S	W	Somi$_1$
6.	Piduwenai	Gre$_1$	S, D(2)	W	Somi$_1$
7.	Piduwenai	Gre$_1$		W	Gas$_1$
8.	Topu	Ihene	D(3), Z	W, ZH, ZS(2)	Dua
9.	Piduwenai	Gre$_1$	B(2), S, BS (5) BD(5), D, Z(2), FZ(2)	BW(4), W, ZH(2), ZS(3), ZD, ZSW(4), ZSD, ZSS(2)	Gas$_1$, Somi$_1$ Drim, Mia, Gondoke, Demesuke$_3$
10.	Dnitonai	Gas$_1$	B(2), S(2), D, BD(2)	W, BW	Gre$_1$

Table 15.a. (cont'd.)

House No.	Hamlet Territory	Owner's Tongesu	Resident Agnat.cs	Resident Affines	Affines' Tongesu
11.	Dupei	$Demesuke_1$	S(3), Z	W, ZH	$Somi_1$
12.	Dnitonai	Bike	S(4), D(2)	W(2)	Gas_1
13.	Graihei	Drim	S(3), D	W	Gre_1
14.	Grahei	Drim	S(1), D(2)	W	Gre_2
15.	Grahei	Drim		W	Gre_1
16.	Dupei	$Demesuke_1$	S,D	W	Gre_2
17.	Piduwenai	Mia	D	W(2)	$Demesuke_1$ Gondoke
18.	Duduyene	$Somi_2$		ZS(3), ZD(2) ZDH, ZDD(2), ZDS(3)	Gre_2, Drim
19.	Grahei	Drim		W	Gre_1
20.	Trienkokei	Gas_2	S(2), D	W	Drim
21.	Trienkokei	Gas_2	B, S(2), D(3) BS	W, BW, MBS	Tmin
22.	Duduyene	$Demsuke_2$	S, D(4), B	W, BW, WB, WBS, WBD, WZH, WZ, WZS	Gre_1 $Somi_2$ Grupe
23.	Grahei	Drim	S(2), D(1), Z(2)	ZS, ZSS, ZSD	Gre_1
24.	Duduyene	Gre_3	S, D	W(3), SW(2)	$Demesuke_2$

*

F = father, M = mother, B = brother, Z = sister, S = son, D = daughter, H = husband, W = Wife. Numerals in brackets indicate the frequency of the preceding kingship category. The total population of 209 does not include those agnates or affines resident in the Kiunga "corner".

Table 15.b.

Summary: Hamlet
Composition by Tongesu

Hamlet Territory	Owner's Tongesu	Resident Affines' Tongesu
1. Grahei	Drim	Gre_1, Gre_2
2. Dnitonai	Gas_1	Gre_1, Gas_2, Bike
3. Piduwenai	Gre_1	$Somi_1$, Gas_1, $Somi_2$, Drim, Mia, Gondoke, $Demesuke_3$
4. Duduyene	$Demesuke_2$	Gre_2, Gre_1, $Somi_2$
	$Somi_2$	$Demesuke_2$, Grupe
	Gre_3	
5. Skikokei	Gre_2	--------
6. Trienkokei	Gas_2	Drim, Tmin
7. Dupei	$Demesuke_1$	$Somi_1$, Gas_2, Gre_2
8. Topu	Ihene	$Somi_1$, Dua
9. Mnaembi	Gondoke	$Somi_1$, $Demesuke_1$
10. Hutienai	Dua	--------

Drimgas village through the region inhabited by the Fly River Aekyom. But for any single hamlet, there were, prior to contact, limits to their extension. Usually, they did not extend beyond adjacent hamlets and I have no evidence that prior to contact they extended beyond two intermediary hamlets. In this latter zone, relations were invariably hostile.

However, by 1955, hamlets of the region had been pacified by the Australian colonial administration. Consequently, as open hostilies either ceased or were drastically reduced — changes welcomed by the Aekyom in general — the more confined nature of hamlet life began to change. Commenting on the Aekyom of South Awin, one patrol officer wrote:

> This isolationism is breaking down under Administration influence and marriages are now occasionally arranged farther afield with a consequent widening of in-law relationships (Patrol Report, 1955, National Archives, Port Moresby).

Indeed, the resettlement of hamlet members in centralized villages increased the degree of overlap in hamlet organizations and established new social ties, including those of marriage, between previously unrelated groups.

Similar, concurrent changes were beginning to take place among the Fly River Aekyom, although much more unevenly. Homicidal raids on enemy hamlets were soon discontinued but lethal sorcery remains a pervasive feature of Fly River Aekyom life. Furthermore, the minimal extension of affinal ties beyond traditional hamlet boundaries and security circles did not fundamentally alter the nature of interpersonal kinship relationships or patterns of marriage. Thus crucial hamlet-based features of Aekyom society and ethnicity remained intact. In the next chapter, I shall examine Aekyom kinship and marriage with a particular goal in mind: to establish more clearly those principles that underly the regulation of social life and the formation of identities.

Summary

There are several units in Aekyom hamlet organization which are conceptually salient and/or culturally recognized by the Aekyom people. The nuclear family (gile) is the smallest social group and the most important for the daily work routine and subsistence activities. The tongesu, composed of people co-resident in a hamlet house/territory and linked together on the basis of agnatic ties among men is the most important localized group vis-à-vis rights in property, the allocation of usufruct rights in land, and hamlet cultural definitions. At the most inclusive level, tongesu are name groups but not corporate groups, since they exercise no corporate functions relative to social, political, economic, religious or legal matters. While common tongesu names pass from a father to his children, justify claims to agnatic kin relationships, permit the use of agnatic kin terms and identify local agnatic groups with particular territories, they do not express a patrilineal vision of society: although characterized by relative age categories, geographically dispersed tongesu sharing a common name are not segments or subdivisions of a common ancestral patrilineage or "clan", a distinction underscored by Aekyom totemic ideology, rules of exogamy and exclusively local rights in property. At the local level, tongesu are not responsible for organizing and/or coordingating labour units. Large scale subsistence activities such as sago harvesting or fishing usually depend on cooperation between cross cousins or affines rather than on agnatic connections or tongesu memberships.

The hamlet membership is the largest resident social group occupying one or more named communal houses and associated dwellings (e.g., bachelors' house, garden shelters, hunting house) and exploiting resources within a discrete bounded territory. Under hamlet exogamy, women often move from their natal group to their husband's group after marriage. Together with a varying incidence of hamlet endogamy, this practice gives rise to a de facto emphasis on virilocal residence. Similary, men recruit sons whenever possible, a situation that facilitates descent, succession and inheritance along agnatic lines. As a result,

hamlet membership includes one or more sets of agnatically related men, their wives and dependent children and unmarried sisters. It may also include other kin, affinal relatives and occasionally adopted children (harkiarin) who for one reason or another have chosen to live away from their natal hamlet. The fact of residence, in combination with the right to use land for gardens, hunting, gathering, etc. — a right which is usually asserted rather than simply inherited — is important in determining hamlet membership. For males, the right to hold, succeed or transfer titular rights in property (especially land) is critical in distinguishing membership in the local hamlet tongesu from general hamlet membership.

As an economically self-sufficient and independent group, the hamlet membership vigorously defends its territory and resources from trespass or illegal appropriation by other hamlet groups. However, mutual respect for and exploitative rights in neighbouring hamlet territories are common, being based on either bush associations or affinal relations. Although usually discrete, these two types of inter-hamlet relations gave each hamlet a security circle or mutual aid nework serving a variety of hamlet interests such as protection, defense, raiding and subsistence. The bonds comprising any hamlet's security circle only partly coincided with those of other hamlets. Thus, rather than forming a permanent regional association reflecting military alliances, political, ritual or economic unity, the security circle consisted of inter-group bonds where the degree of overlap with those of other hamlets increased or decreased depending on various political, social, demographic and economic contingencies.

As they will assume greater significance in the following chapters, aspects of local group formation at the level of the hamlet may be conveniently summarized by Table 16.

Table 16.

Local Group

Formation in the Aekyom Hamlet

Group	Principle
Nuclear family (gile)	Congugality, economic cooperation, inheritance
Agnatic collectivity (tongesu)	Names, agnation, property rights
Hamlet membership	Residence, property rights, affinity, kinship, adoption

CHAPTER 4: KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE: SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION, FUNCTION AND MEANING

Introduction

The study of kinship and marriage is fundamental to an understanding of how the Aekyom conceptualize and regulate social life. In addition to providing information on the differentiation and articulation of social categories, analysis of social arrangements at this level may also provide a significant orientation to other cultural institutions, symbolic systems and principles of cosmic ordering (Crick, 1976; Kaplan, 1984; Shapiro, 1984). The present chapter, therefore, is concerned with the place of Aekyom kinship and marriage within their wider socio-cultural contexts.

It begins with a brief survey of areal forms of cultural organization which draws attention to significant variations as well as shared, general themes in kinship structures. This discussion is then brought to bear on the specific features of Aekyom kinship and marriage. First, Aekyom social classification is described and analysed through a detailed consideration of the relationship terminology. As a first step, the formal properties of the relationship terminology are elucidated on the basis of genealogical connections. Then the focus on the referential properties of the relationship terms is broadened by investigating their linguistic and cultural content, together with the prevailing system of attitudes. The principal aim here is to determine what bearing the scheme of social classification has on hamlet organization. In particular the concern is with: (i) the form of kinship reckoning; (ii) models of social integration; and (iii) the way the categories are applied as a means of social interaction, especially as they relate to patterns of Aekyom marriage. The topic of marriage is then examined from sociological and religious points of view. Historical documentation and statistical data on Aekyom marriage practices are presented against a background of local

marriage norms and practices, and discussed in the context of reciprocity and alliance. The status of Aekyom marriage as a "total phenomenon" (Mauss, 1967) is then pursued along religious dimensions. Here special emphasis is placed on Aekyom marriage rituals, and the religious idioms and cosmic imagery that parallel other Aekyom cultural institutions.

General Considerations: Areal Perspectives on Kinship and Descent

My point of departure is a consideration of Aekyom kinship and descent from an areal perspective. This initial approach is consistent with aspects of Aekyom ethnohistory, mythology and inter-ethnic contact in the Ok Tedi Area, outlined in Chapter 2.

Although it is incomplete, the ethnography of the Ok Tedi Area does demonstrate remarkable "diversity and uniformity" in social forms with no single type of social organization dominating the area as a whole.[1] Among the Min, for example, differences in descent categories and related cultural features may be observed among groups of the northern and central regions, groups to the west and groups situated to the east and south east. Among the northern Telefomin there appears to be little concern with lineage structures as a basis for social organization (Craig, 1969; Jorgensen, 1983), a theme reflected among the central Faiwolmin where lineality and exogamy are inconspicuous (Barth, 1971). The westerly Wopkaimin, however, are organized on the basis of cognatic descent groups called (kinoomit). Each kinoomit forms the core members of localized groups which accommodate variable residence practices and endogamous marriages. kinoomit are named with several kinoomit often sharing the same name (Hyndman, 1978; Welsch, 1979:42). To the east and southeast, patrilineal exogamous clans may be found (Barth, 1971). Nevertheless, as Barth (1975, 1982) explains for the Baktamin case, social organization appears to pivot on male cult and initiation rites. In this context, the predominant focus is on growth and fertility almost to the complete exclusion of lineages or clans as socio-cultural forms.[2] Among the Baktamin,

> Patrilineal exogamous clans ... seem weakly conceptualized; they emerge more as a by-product of certain cult activities and their relevance in everyday life is suppressed because of this association with secret cult (Barth, 1975:25).

As the ethnography of the Ok Tedi Area extends into the lowlands, both the form and function of descent groups appear to acquire prominent cultural definitions. According to Welsch (1979, 1983) the Ningerum recognize patrilineal clans whose geographically dispersed segments or sub-clans constitute the core members of localized descent groups. These localized groups occupy discrete, independent homesteads as extended nuclear families, have exclusive access to patrilineage territories and exercise corporate functions in the areas of economics, politics and religion. While patrilineal clans do not perform corporate activities, individual homesteads linked by patrilineal ties may cooperate with one another in a variety of tasks within the same bounded territory or parish (Welsch, 1979:25). In general, the nature of Ningerum property rights parallels that among the Aekyom. More importantly, despite the apparently unique status of Ningerum clans as descent categories,[3] their similarities with Aekyom "clans" merit serious attention. According to Welsch (1979:27),

> There are two terms which the Nigerum use to refer to their clans, kawatom, meaning "people-base" or "people-owner", and ka-dun, meaning "people name". First and foremost, clans are name groups. They are sets of people who share an ancestral name and common origins, even though many clan members live away from their clan territory.... Clan names provide an ideological charter for the formation of territorially based local clan segments, but they are not used as individual charters for land ownership. No one would claim rights to a particular piece of land on the basis of his clan name.

This last point is illustrated in a brief reference to the segmentation of Ningerum clans:

> Save clan, for example has segments in Oktidetau, Derongo, Mangolavarum and Haidauwogam villages. Save people acknowledge a common origin and a common

clan ancestor. They explain the dispersed territories as the result of migrations in both historical and mythological times. Men in different Save clan segments reckon kin relationships through their common clan affiliation and use agnatic kin terms. But they have absolutely no claim to lands in other Save territories. Each Save segment exploits its own territory and manages its own affairs independently. Their close kin ties lie in neighbouring local clan segments, not in other local Save segments (Welsch, 1979:28).

This last point is all the more interesting given the importance of maternal descent in Ningerum society, a cultural feature which, unfortunately, Welsch does not elaborate.[4] Nevertheless, it is certainly curious that even lower order clan divisions, including named sub-clans and sub-sub-clans show little political cohesion,[5] a characteristic that might be expected among members of the same patrilineage (e.g., Meggitt, 1965), or that sub-clan endogamy should be a relatively common practice. More importantly, Welsch (1979) himself oscillates in his description of the conceptual status of Ningerum clans between the idea of a patrilineal clan composed of lower order units and the notion of a patrilineal ideology supporting a pattern of patrifilial recruitment and virilocal residence. This ambiguity is especially significant given the proximity of the Ningerum to the Aekyom and the tribes of the Star Mountains, all of whom share many important aspects of "clan" nomenclature.

In the Star Mountains, the cultural focus is on the kaga-don. Pouwer (1964) suggests that kaga-don are patrilineal descent categories, a distinction also drawn by Welsch for the linguistically similar ka-dun among the neighbouring Ningerum.[6] Pouwer bases his argument on three types of evidence including:

(i) kaga-don names;

(ii) the mode of kaga-don name transmission; and

(iii) the kaga-don's field of denotation.

In the Star Mountains, membership in the most inclusive group is

claimed on the basis of a kaga-don name. Throughout the area, kaga-don names are transmitted from a father to his children. In addition to a name group, kaga-don denote social forms that may be identified at other levels of social organization. Stated more precisely, the denotata of kaga-don are also correlated with distinctions of social scale. It is especially in this context that kaga-don give the impression of a specific lineage organization or form of kinship reckoning.

Star Mountains settlement patterns are characterized by dispersed social aggregates, each consisting of several single, independent nuclear family dwellings. These aggregates or "hamlets" are scattered throughout a parish, the largest territorial unit with corporate functions usually of a political nature. In combination with adjacent parishes it also exercises religious functions. Such large scale formations involve people in regional religious communities whose members are identified with several separate kaga-don. Pouwer (1964:157) suggests that the link between members of regional kaga-don and religious organizations,

> ... probably came into being through the local distribution of lineage members, often a pair of brothers who became the founders of lineage nuclei [spanning no more than three generations] and lineages.

They would subsequently form the primary community for mutual participation in cult activity and regional kaga-don solidarities which flow from it. Regional kaga-don in turn accommodate smaller scale, parish-centred social forms whose members are dispersed throughout several "hamlets" within the parish and occupy nuclear family dwellings. Even when they are in geographical proximity, members of a common kaga-don at this level do not show any signs of corporate cohesion.

> Each nuclear family operates independently, preferring its separate home. Although a number of related nuclear families may cooperate in gardening and in organizing festivities, it is on a voluntary and reciprocal basis ... the nuclear family ... is an independently operating work, residential, consumption and property-owning unit, usually with its

> own house, garden plot and routine (Pouwer, 1964:138, 141).

Why then, given a common kaga-don name, do Star Mountains social formations not provide models for social integration or functional cohesion? Why should they be superceded as potential corporate units by the "hamlet" and parish? Why in fact are genealogical relationships not used towards these ends? The answer lies, according to Pouwer, in historical processes: genealogical superstructures in the Star Mountains are continuously undermined by demographic, social, political, economic and other historical contingencies, together with certain elements of the infrastructure, including the ascendency of horizontal kinship relations over vertical ones. For example,

> If one or more brothers settles outside the parish, this leads to the emergence of a new lineage, as happened with the Taplor lineage at Oksitbakon. The genealogical relation between this lineage and the current members of the Taplor lineage at Kungoldin, where the former originated, is now completely forgotten. The two lineages intermarry normally. Both lineages are genealogically, politically, socially and economically independent in every respect. They have only the clan name in common (Pouwer, 1964:156-157).

This observation raises an obvious question: are kaga-don names simply historical residues, reminders of the bygone integrity of patrilineal descent groups as corporate entities? While this view may seem plausible, it does not exhaust the range of alternative interpretations suggested by the Star Mountains ethnography. According to Pouwer, kaga-don are patrilineal name groups which are an integral part of historical tradition and cultural practice in the Star Mountains.

> Virilocal marriage, combined with a tendency towards patrilocality or fratrilocality, mechanically produces a separate male line. Influenced by a strongly developed patrilineal ideology which in this case finds expression in the "Omaha" terminology, this mechanical line may achieve cultural recognition. A minimal form of recognition consists of giving an hereditary name to the line. This is the basis of the Star Mountains patrilineal name groups (Pouwer, 1964:143; cf. Leach, 1961).

While perhaps persuasive, it is difficult to sustain this interpretation, particularly in light of other Star Mountains data and the findings of comparative ethnography.

Pouwer (1964) fails to fully explore what may well be the most crucial issue for an understanding of kaga-don and kaga-don names. Simply stated, what are the cultural presuppositions of kaga-don and Kaga-don names? Pouwer (1964:136, 157-158) assumes they are about genealogical connections or patrilineal (or patrilateral) ties given their mode of transmission (from father to son) and manner of allotment (among brothers). Both mechanisms, it seems, provide evidence for "well developed" patrilineal concepts in the Star Mountains. Yet in many ways, this assumption is difficult to reconcile with other cultural features of the Star Mountains and Ok Tedi Area societies. For example it is stressed that Star Mountains society is not conceptualized by its members in terms of unilineal descent or descent groups. Rather, the appropriate or prevailing collective representation or model of society is that of marriage between a brother and sister[7] (Pouwer, 1964:137). Insofar as these findings undermine the conceptual status of kaga-don as patrilineal descent categories they are supported by data on comparative religions. As Barth (see above) notes, weakly conceptualized patrilineal descent categories among the Baktamin are a result, not a precondition, of male cult activity. This conclusion parallels the crucial role played by a similar religious organization among Star Mountains groups (Barth, 1971; Pouwer, 1964:134-135, 160), in defining regional kaga-don where genealogical (i.e., patrilineal) connections are of little or no interest. With this background in mind, Pouwer's reference to the conceptual support given by the Star Mountains relationship terminology to the suggested patrilineal kinship forms seems irrelevant. At any rate, as Needham (1966, 1967) has shown, there is no necessary implication between the type of relationship terminology and empirical social forms.

More importantly, the idea of kaga-don may imply far more than genealogical information. Kaga-don may be translated as meaning "human stalk" or "family tree". Pouwer (1964:137-138) argues these metaphors

give credence to the "lineal idea" and therefore are at the root of a continuous unilineal tradition, namely the inheritance of patrilineal group names. But, given the immemorial quality of the kaga-don (see footnote 7), such a tradition would have to take into account the place of mythical brother/ sister marriage in the scheme of relevant idioms. Equally important, it would be useful to know how people in the Star Mountains conceptualize trees. Comparative data from the Ok Tedi Area indicates that such kinship idioms may be complex in their meanings and reference and perhaps misleading when cast in preconceived descent frameworks. The Aekyom, who also express their ancestral origins and group names in terms of arboreal metaphors (see Chapters 5 and 6), classify trees as ambiguously male and female. More importantly, they emphasize the tree's female "side" when it is in its reproductive phase. These data are even more suggestive for the Star Mountains case when compared with Pouwer's (1964:139) striking statement that "... bilateral and matrilateral elements occur in these social systems on quite a significant scale". Curiously, then, he does not pursue the underlying logic of mythical brother/sister marriage and reproduction and their implications for the nature of kaga-don and kaga-don names.[8] Only in the conclusion to his paper and only obliquely does Pouwer begin to tie the disconnected threads of Star Mountains cultural patterns together. Here he draws a comparison with other New Guinea societies to show that descent categories may be premised on a variety of cultural themes, including cross-sex sibling relations, the nuclear family, religious activities and land categories as opposed to unilineal or genealogical conceptions (see Burridge, 1959:128, 130; 1969; De Bruyn and Pouwer, 1958:153-154; Salisbury, 1956:4; 1965; cf. Gell, 1975:44-45; Strathern, 1973). Pouwer, of course, is not unaware of the formal significance of these oppositions for the structural character of Star Mountains society in general, and kaga-don in particular. But his methodological bifurcation of "society" into "social organization" and "social structure" leads him to the conclusion that Star Mountains society is a mix of separate structural principles, cultural forms and functions (Pouwer, 1964:137-141) and away from the idea, suggested by mythical, linguistic and other data, that they may be more closely integrated through a sort of dialectical interplay between

principles of kinship, descent and marriage (cf. Wagner, 1967).

Nevertheless, it is clear, in view of the comparative data from the Ok Tedi Area, that we are in the presence of a shared cultural idiom vis-à-vis kinship forms and descent categories, though one whose implications for a certain type of social and community organization seem to be confined to certain contexts. This cultural primacy of names for group definitions and membership is an issue to be pursued in Chapters 5 and 6 where the details of the Aekyom case are discussed. For the moment, I shall be concerned with the particulars of the Aekyom kinship system and marriage.

Social Classification

Methodological Considerations: Data Gathering

Since this section discusses the order and patterns of Aekyom social categories, a few words about how the data were gathered and the subsequent limitations on their analysis and interpretation seem appropriate. Like most ethnographers, I began my inquiries by taking a census. The centralization of hamlets in Drimgas village initially provided a basis for the most efficient compiling of demographic data on the Drimgas population. These data were then cross-checked by a census of individual hamlets associated with Drimgas village and then supplemented by inquiries made at Drimgas "corner" in Kiunga. The information gathered by the census was later enhanced by the collection of informant pedigrees and the construction of their genealogies, which were continually refined throughout the period of my fieldwork. For these tasks, all adult men and women, including married and senior men and women resident in Drimgas village, its territorial hamlets and Drimgas "corner" were interviewed.[9]

An earlier pilot study using open-end ed questions had revealed several important characteristics about the distribution and nature of genealogical knowledge in the population. First, senior women were slightly more knowledgeable about the full extent of genealogies than all other categories of informant. Second, most of the genealogies elicited from informants tended to show greater scope than depth. Third, the depth of matrilateral genealogies equalled or exceeded the depth of patrilateral genealogies. And fourth, men were more likely to fuse the tongesu identities of their deceased parents or parents' parents — which further investigation and cross-checking suggested were distinct — than any other category of informant. Therefore, a more structured interview format that took into consideration these findings was used to elicit genealogical information extending across five genealogical levels.

The Relationship Terminology

Examination of the Aekyom relationship terminology also raises some methodological concerns as well as problems of analysis and interpretation which may be briefly mentioned here. As will become apparent, the formal properties of the relationship terminology indicate a structural ambiguity of symmetric and asymmetric forms which may be unique to the Ok Tedi Area[10] but parallels other world societies such as Endeh and Warao (Needham, 1968, [illegible] 1974). The question of its evolutionary status then becomes a significant focus for attention, especially from an areal point of view. Secondly, certain sets of genealogical referents are associated with alternative or ambigious terminological designations. Combined with dialectal variations they have a potential — which is sometimes realized by informants — to create confusion at various points in the relationship terminology. However, it may be added that the differences between Aekyom dialects in this context seem to be of an isomorphic nature: so it is reasonable to speak of the Fly River Aekyom relationship terminology as a structural variant within the wider Aekyom social and linguistic community. Thirdly, the form and extent of my informants' knowledge about relationship terms had an influence on how the data were collected and what limitations were imposed on the analysis and interpretation of the terminology as a whole. With respect to form, the Aekyom readily and spontaneously phrase genealogical specifications (of relationship terms) by stringing possessives together.[11] Thus both hypothetical and actual genealogical chains were used to elicit relationship terms. However, it was not always possible nor methodologically justifiable to separate reference terms from address terms for the purposes of formal analysis or illustrating kinship behaviour, respectively, since certain relationship terms with the same genealogical referents could be substituted for one another in this context.

The extent of informants' knowledge was constrained by factors characteristic of the population in general as well as by the specific variables of age and sex. Few informants were able to provide relationship terms without some degree of difficulty when lineal and/or collateral

genealogical referents reached two or more ascending or descending levels.[12] At other times, relationship terms of narrower genealogical range (e.g., FBW "father's brother's wife") might be erroneously given, then either corrected by the informant alone or in consultation with knowledgeable others. Usually, it is senior male and female Aekyom who demonstrate the most complete knowledge of relationship terms. However, terms specific to a male speaker are best known by men while those used exclusively by women are best known by women.

This completes the preliminary discussion of the major issues and themes pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of the relationship terminology. The next step is to present the relationship terminology in the form of tables which list categories of relatives for male or female speakers together with some of their genealogical referents. Then, it is described in terms of its own categories by abstracting underlying ordering principles. Once the formal properties of the terminology have been taken into account, a number of subsidiary and more problematical aspects of the terminology may be considered, especially in light of social institutions and kinship behaviours.

Since some relationship terms are specific to the sex of their users, I follow Barnes (1974) by presenting separate lists for male and female ego. Unlike the Kédang case, however, it is not particularly useful to separate Aekyom terms of reference from terms of address for reasons outlined above.

Table 17.a.

The AeKyom Relationship Terminology (Male Ego)*

kiguam	FF, FFeB, FeB, FMB, MF, MFB, MMB, MMH, MeZH, FFZH
bule	FFyB, FyB, MH, MyZH
aepei	FFZ, FZ, Ze, FBDe, MZDe, FZSWe, ZHM, DHM, FZHZ, FFZHZ
ahwi/ali	MM, MMZ, MeZ, FM, FMZ, MFZ, FeBW, WFeZ, FFM, FMBW
ai	F
aemae	M, MyZ, FyBW, FW
aepua	MB, WF
owei	MBW, WM, WMZ, BWM, MBWZ, MMBD
masu	FZH, WBS, WBD, ZHF, SW, SWB, BSW, MBSS, MBSD
angei	Be, FBSe, MZSe, MBDHe, SWFe
gmore	By, FBSy, MZSy, MBDHy, SWFy, BS
auke	Zy, FBDy, MZDy, FZSWy
mote	MBD, MBS, FZD, FZS, DHF, SWF, ZH, ZHB, BW, WB, WZ, FWSW, MZSW, FMBSD, MMBDD
tia	S, BC, WC, WZC, FBSC
gute	D, ZD, FZD, FZSD, ZSW
aentmin	ZS, DH, BDH, ZDH, FZSS
kiunkia	SS, SD, BSS, BSD, ZSS, WBDS, WBDD
gutekia	DS, DD, BDS, BDD, ZDD, ZDS, WBSS, WBSD, ZSD
amban	MBSW, FZDH, WBW, SWM, WMB, MBWB

* F = father, M = mother, B = brother, Z = sister, S = son, D = daughter, C=child H = husband, W = wife; e = elder, y = younger; e or y at the end of a relationship term's genealogical specification indicates age relative to ego. The relationship terms listed in this table and Table 17.b. delineate categories of relatives which are not defined by the corresponding genealogical specifications. The latter are simply some genealogical referents of them. Relationship terms are listed in the first person singular without possessives.

Table 17.b.

The AeKyom Relationship Terminology (Female Ego)

kiguam	FF, FFeB, FeB, FMB, MF, MFB, MMB, MMH, MeZH
bule	FFyB, FyB, MH, MyZH, HMB, HZH
aepei	FFZ, FZ, Ze, FBDe, MZDe, FZSWe, HM, HMZ, HFZ, HBW, HMBDe, FZHZ
ahwi/ali	MM, MMZ, MeZ, FM, FeBW, MFZ, FFM, FMBW
ai	F
aemae	M, MyZ, FW, FyBW, HMBW
aepua	MB, BWF
owei	MBW, BWM, MBWZ,.MMBD
masu	FZH, HF, HFB, ZHF
angei	Be, FBSe, MZSe, MBDHe, SWFe
gmore	By, FBSy, MZSy, MBDHy, BS, SWFy
auke	Zy, FBDy, MZDy, FZSWy, SW, HMBDy, BSW, ZSW, BD
mote	MBS, FZS, ZH, BWB, ZHZ
mgei	MBD, FZD, HZ, SWM, BW, DHM
tia	S, ZS, BD, BDH, SWZ
gute	D, ZD, FZD, FZSD, HZD
aepite	DH, ZDH, HZS, BDH
kiunkia	SS, BSS, BSD, BDS, ZSS
gutekia	DS, DD, SD, BDD, ZDD, ZSD, ZDS
amban	MBSW, FZDH, HZH, MBWB

Formal Analysis

There are certain diagnostic features of the relationship terminology which suggest both lineal and asymmetric traits. The following equations and distinctions which apply to the terms used by a male ego are indicative of linearity.

M = MZ	FB ≠ MB	Z ≠ MBD
B = FBS	FZ ≠ MZ	Z ≠ FZD
Z = FBD	B ≠ MBS	S ≠ WBS
S = BC = FBSC	B ≠ FZS	S ≠ ZS

The line is further distinguished by the separation of certain lineal relatives:

F ≠ FB, D ≠ BD;

and the following distinctions of sex

FB ≠ FZ, B ≠ Z, S ≠ D,

as well as of relative age

FeB ≠ FyB, Be ≠ By, Ze ≠ Zy.

The equations and distinctions indicating asymmetry are:

FB = MZH	MB ≠ FZH
MZ = FBW	FZH ≠ WF
MB = WF	FZ ≠ MBW
FZ = ZHM	WBW ≠ Z
MBD = BW	WBS ≠ ZS
MBS = WB	SW ≠ ZD
B = MZS, WZH	FFZ ≠ FMBW
FZS = ZH	
ZS = DH	
S = WZS	
ZD = FZSD	

These lineal and asymmetric features of the terminology are consistent with the presence of agnatic groups at the level of the hamlet as well as observations relating to the practice of matrilateral cross cousin marriage[13] (see below). But further examination of the relationship terminology shows equations that are indicative of symmetry,

MBD = FZD

MBS = FZS

WB = ZH

while others such as

D = ZD = FZD = FZSD

while not inconsistent with asymmetric principles do suggest certain problems with respect to the integrity of the lineal aspects of the terminology. Before I consider these, however, it will prove instructive to analyse the relationship terms used by a female ego.

The features that are diagnostic of lineality described for a male ego also hold in the case of a female ego with the following exceptions:

S = ZS ≠ BS; D = ZD ≠ BD

However, these equations and distinctions are also systematic features of lineal terminologies (e.g., Barnes, 1974:277). Similarly, the asymmetric order of terms used by a male ego is, mutatis mutandis, also evident for those used by a female ego. The features diagnostic of asymmetry include the following equations and distinctions:

FZ = HM	MBS = BWB	MB ≠ FZH
FB = MZH	MBD = BW	FZH ≠ BWF
MZ = FBW	B = MZS	FZ ≠ BWM
M = HMBW	FZS = HB	BSW ≠ D
MB = BWF	Z = HMBD	BWB ≠ ZH
	S, ZS = BDH	

Finally, the symmetrical properties of the terminology demonstrated for a male ego are reflected in the following equations for a female ego:

FZD = MBD; FZS = MBS; BW = HZ

It is clear up to this point in the formal analysis of relationship terms used by male or female ego, that the social classification is constituted by factors that do not easily lend themselves as a whole to typological casting (cf. Needham, 1968:333; Pouwer, 1964:140-141). This is an important point since it suggests that the social classification does not necessarily imply a particular normative framework or rule of behaviour, although it may be congruent with either. As will be discussed in detail later, the Aekyom do emphasize a unilateral principle which in practice translates into asymmetric or matrilateral cross cousin marriage. Yet the symmetrical properties of the relationship terminology would seem to argue against the characterization of it as an instance of asymmetric prescriptive alliance. This is not an isolated problem. Eslewhere Needham (1968) has discussed the issue of formal inconsistencies in relatioship terminologies and their implications for unilateral marriage practices. He concludes that symmetry may be workable in a unilateral social context given certain pragmatic adjustments in the relationship terminology. The Aekyom case is especially significant in this context.

Before I provide the necessary evidence relevant to this issue, I wish to make some preliminary remarks about the relationship term that is central to it. In an affinal context, mote is used as a reciprocal term of address or reference between in-laws at the same terminological level. The only exception concerns sisters-in-law who use the reciprocal term mgei. The term mote also designates the relationship between cross cousins except, again for female cross cousins who use the reciprocal term mgei. Thus, for a male ego, mote is more widely distributed as a relationship term with an affinal connotation in the context of Aekyom kinship and marriage. That this category is of a reduced significance for females is suggested, first of all, by its narrower distribution for female speakers. Secondly, a no less important fact is that within the Aekyom linguistic community there exists a special term for female affine, rinaen ("wife"), although many Aekyom speakers and all Fly River Aekyom usually use the terms knu ("man, male") and ala ("woman, female") when pressed by the ethnographer to indicate terms for spouse categories.[14] Finally, the bilateral category mote is subject to fewer qualifications for

female speakers than for male speakers, a point that is of considerable interest when discussing formal inconsistencies in the relationship terminology.

Although bilateral cross cousins and certain affinal relatives are addressed or referred to as mote, there is a distinction MBD ≠ FZD or MBS ≠ FZS effected by a separate or qualifying term. When asked how an individual would know, without sufficient genealogical knowledge, which mote should be married my informants stated that it is one's sene or sen mote,[15] a category whose key genealogical referents include MBD and FZS, but exclude FZD and MBS. This practical qualification of a formal symmetrical ordering then suggests the importance of unilateral principles for classification. In apparent support of this notion, there is a second qualification of the bilateral category, not by a separate term this time but on the basis of a structural equivalence: the genealogical specification FZD is also classified as gute. Again, when male informants were asked why they called the FZD, gute, they replied, "We follow our fathers when we call the FZD "gute". Significantly, some other genealogical specifications of this term include, for a male ego, D and ZD. Given these equations, gute suggests the idea of patrilateral relative, and in the case of the FZD, a patrilateral cross cousin. Thought of in this way, FZD or gute is a kin category as opposed to an affinal category. The logic of laterality as an ordering principle, in combination with the asymmetry of the terminology vis-à-vis affinal categories, implies that the MBD is not a matrilateral cross cousin or kin category but a unilateral affinal category (cf. Dumont, 1953) and potential spouse. These comments, therefore, direct attention to the integrity of the sibling relationship at the first ascending terminological level and in particular its bearing on issues of kinship, descent and marriage as reflected in the terminology.

The relationship terms at this level accord with lineality and asymmetric marriage. The lineal character of the terminology is reflected in the following equations and distinctions:

M = MyZ; FB ≠ MB; FZ ≠ MZ

While it is not absolutely crucial that siblings be equated in order to

confirm lineality, it is important to note that relative age is a significant ordering principle, especially among terms for males within the line.

The ordering of terms in the first ascending terminological level is also unequivocally asymmetrical as the following equations and distinctions show:

MB = WF	MB ≠ FZH
MBW = WM	FZ ≠ MBW
FZ = HM	FZ ≠ WM
FZH = HF	FZH ≠ WF

In practice, however, the asymmetry is subject to some modification when the reciprocal marital exchange of sisters has taken place. Under this form of reciprocity, the FZ is also the MBW and she will be referred to or addressed as owei "MBW" rather than as aepei "FZ" (cf. Gell, 1975: 57, 196). Similarly, the MB is also the FZH. But under no circumstances is the MB (aepua) even correctly referred to/addressed as masu ("FZH"). Such structural adjustments seem to reflect the uneven status of the sexes in the context of marriage exchange, a social theme also noted by Pouwer (1964:143) for the Star Mountains. On the other hand, the intransigence of the category aepua would follow from the formal requirement, expressed in the terminology, that the MB be defined as a wife-giver (alanai) rather than as a wife-taker (knunai).[16] That the FZHZ is also called aepei gives formal support to the idea that masu "FZH" is a wife-taker and should not give his sister (or any female members of his line) as a wife to a male member of ego's line. Therefore, the formal implication for the status of the daughter of aepua is that she be recognized as the marriageable mote, even as a bilateral relative under conditions of reciprocal sister exchange marriage.

The asymmetric character of the terminology at the first descending level is demonstrated, for a male ego, by the following equations and distinctions:

ZS = DH	ZS ≠ WBS
S = WZS	ZD ≠ SW
SW = WBD	

For a female ego, the asymmetric features of the first descending terminological level are demonstrated by the following equations and distinctions:

DH = HZS	DH ≠ BS
SW, SWZ = BD	SW ≠ HZD
S, ZS = BDH	BSW ≠ D

However, the lineal character of the terminology is not fully confirmed at the first descending terminological level, at least in terms of equations and distinctions that are diagnostic of lineal descent terminologies. The following equations and distinctions, for a female ego, conform to a lineal terminology:

S = ZS	S ≠ BS
D = ZD	D ≠ BD

as do the following for a male ego:

S = BS = FBSS; S ≠ ZS

But the expected lineal terminological distinction , D ≠ ZD, does not hold for a male ego. Even more curious, the terminological equation between D and ZD is extended to the FZD for a male ego. These observations raise an important question: what bearing does the integrity of the cross sex sibling relationship have on categories of linearity and descent as expressed in the relationship terminology?

Significantly, if the Aekyom are compared with some other Ok Tedi Area societies, we find some general trends in the mode of kin classification which are closely linked to the cross sex sibling relationship. Here an interesting parallel may be drawn with Star Mountains societies.

> The interdependence and mutual help of brother and sister, based on their common origin and their reciprocal roles in the marriage exchange, results in a firm solidarity both before and after marriage. This solidarity, of course, affects the status of their children. The tie with sister's child is thus a very strong one ... A man addresses his sister's child by the same term as he uses for his own child. In referring to them, however, he differentiates between the two categories (Pouwer, 1964:143).

Such lineal transformations combined with a horizontal emphasis in the scheme of kin classification is even more pronounced among the Aekyom. Thus, in contrast to the Star Mountains, the differentiation of D and ZD in Aekyom society is accomplished not by differences in terminological modes of address and reference but in terms of nominal distinctions at individual and group levels (see Chapter 5). This of course directly reflects the importance of names and naming as cultural idioms vis-à-vis definitions of group membership and identity. However, this does not resolve our present problem: the fusion of otherwise lineally distinct genealogical referents by the term gute raises the issue of the nature of descent as expressed in the relationship terminology.

As we have seen, Aekyom society shows a bias towards male or agnatic relationship for the purpose of recruitment to groups at the levels of hamlet organization and property relations. It would be illuminating then, for the purpose of describing the nature of Aekyom descent categories, to analyse the place of the ZS in the scheme of relationship terms. Among the Fly River Aekyom the ZS is referred to or addressed as aentmin, a term which is distinguished from tia, the term for "son". However, my informants were quite clear that the ZS may also be called gutekolei, especially at the time of and following his marriage.[17] This term is of special interest since it may be described in terms of its constituent elements: (i) gute, a relationship term discussed above; and (ii) kolei, a term used to indicate male gender.[18] Interpreted as a "male gute" then, gutekolei introduces considerable ambiguity into the scheme of descent catgories at the level of the relationship terminology. More importantly, it confirms an underlying principle that orders the more general category gute in the relationship terminology. Used exclusively by aepua, aemae or ai, gute draws attention to a relationship set (see Lévi-Strauss, 1963) that is defined in terms of filiation, siblingship and marriage and which has a direct bearing on the nature of descent. More specifically, the logic of the relationship terminology indicates that the union of a line of female filiation, calculated from the sister, with a line of male filiation, calculated from the brother, creates an ambiguous descent category – gute, gutekolei or aentmin – and one that appears as if it were

the product of a brother and sister marriage (cf. Burridge, 1969:111-113). Logically, this would imply that patrilineality is of less significance as a structurally discrete category of descent than is its calculation from the cross sex sibling relationship and marriage. It is interesting then that at ascending terminological levels, the relationship terminology shows a horizontal emphasis among agnatically related males and females while vertical distinctions among agnatically related males remain intact. Put another way, in contrast to relationships among male agnates, the relationship between male and female agnates, as expressed in the relationship terminology, remains constant at ascending terminological levels.[19]

This characterization of descent may also go some way towards explaining the unusual symmetry in a relationship terminology that seems to be ordered primarily on the basis of asymmetric and lineal principles. As we have seen, mote is applied to bilateral cross cousins despite an otherwise asymmetric distribution of terms. Symmetry at this level would seem to flow from the union of a line of female filiation, calculated from the sister/mother with a line of patrifiliation calculated from the brother/father. As a result, bilateral cross cousins claim common descent, albeit ambiguously so, via cross sex sibling and marriage ties. Insofar as this represents a central problmatic in Aekyom society and culture, we should expect relations between mote as well as between aepua and aentmin (or gutekolei) to be a dominant focus of Aekyom mythology, especially in the context of individual and group identity (see Chapters 1 and 6).

Not all categories as presented in the relationship terminology can be said to assume such an ambiguous signification. The relationship terms masu, used reciprocally between FZH and WBC, for example seems unequivocally affinal in character. Above all else, it does not indicate a category of (ambiguous) descent since it is neither situated within ego's line nor linked to ego through a line of female filiation. Thus at the first descending terminological level, masu contrasts with aentmin/gutekolei, both formally and functionally. By "functionally" I mean the line of female filiation has a further structural entailment. This is to say that female

kinship statuses (e.g., mother, sister, daughter) which constitute the line of female filiation are crucial in establishing categories of descent, despite the ideological and nominal emphasis on "patrilineality". These themes draw attention once again to the place of a "masculinized" kinship status, gutenkolei, within the relationship terminology as a whole. In order to further explore this issue, it will be necessary to examine the distribution of relationship terms in alternate terminological levels.

For either male or female ego, all males of the second ascending terminological level may be called kiguam. It should be pointed out here that terminological level does not necessarily correspond to genealogical level. The FeB, for example, belongs to the first ascending genealogical level but is placed at the second ascending terminological level. Conversely, the FFyB is a member of the second ascending genealogical level but is classified by the terminology as belonging to the first ascending terminological level. These differences reflect the importance of birth order as a principle of classification. I shall demonstrate in the following chapter how this distinction in the relationship terminology parallels the structural characteristics of the naming system.

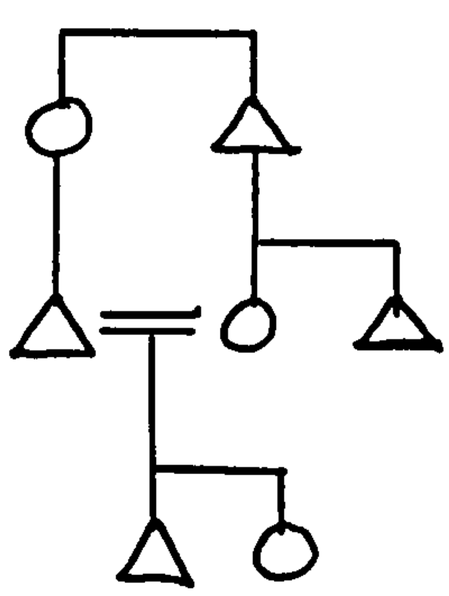
The social classification of females at the second ascending terminological level parallels, in some respects, the distribution of the relationship term kiguam. For a male ego, the term ahwi is applicable to matrilateral or affinal female relatives. These include all females of the second ascending genealogical level and beyond, as well as elder females of the first ascending genealogical level, e.g., MeZ, FeBW. Ahwi also encompasses the female maternal relatives of the mother, MM, MMZ. However, ahwi does not exhaust the range of genealogical referents of relationship terms for females at the second ascending terminological or genealogical levels. As noted earlier, the term aepei bridges the central, first and second ascending terminological levels. A similar bridging of genealogical or terminological levels is effected by the relationship term aemae. For female ego, aemae includes female relatives of the first and second ascending levels who are members of wife-giving groups in relation to ego's group. The reasons for highlighting the distribution of these

relationship terms is that it is closely linked to the naming system. Although birth order is less significant for females than males as an ordering principle, the distribution of these relationship terms is structurally congruent with the wider social implications of the naming system. But before this is demonstrated (see Chapter 5) it is important to return to the question of the formal and functional significance of the ZS in relation to the distribution of terms at the second descending terminological level.

Genealogical positions defined at this level may be assigned to either one of two specific relationship terms but not to both. Males or females may be called kiunkia or gutekia. Formally, there are specific criteria or rules that structure the distribution of kiunkia and gutekia throughout the relevant genealogical space. For a male or female ego, assignment of either term to a genealogical position depends on the sex of the linking relative in the first descending terminological level. Thus, kiunkia is applied to those male or female statuses where the crucial linking relative is male while gutekia is applied to a male or female status where the significant linking relative is female. However, there are two exceptions to these rules. The first concerns the descendants in the second descending terminological level, of a male or female ego's affines. Here the rules for assignment of terms are reversed: WBSC or HZSC are called gutekia while WBDC or HZDC are called kiunkia. This reversal is, neverthless, consistent with the structurally congruent categorization of ego's own or siblings' genealogical referents as kiunkia or gutekia, given the asymmetric ordering of the relationship terminology. The second exception to the rules is more remarkable and draws formal attention to the position of the ZS (male ego) and BD (female ego) in the relationship terminology. Curiously, the ZSD is classified as gutekia while the BDS is classified as kiunkia, from the points of view of male and female egos, respectively. However, these discrepancies disappear if we bear in mind the formal inconsistencies or anomalies already described for the relationship terminology. Specifically, formal symmetry conjoins lines of male and female filiation, derived from the brother-sister relationship. This places the sister's son in an ambiguous category of descent that is formally

exploited. Thus, ZSD is the offspring of gutekolei, a female kinship category. However, ZSS is kunkia given the masculine nature of the category gutekolei. The classification of BDS as kiunkia on the other hand would seem to be a structural entailment of the asymmetrical patterning in the relationship terminology: i.e., BDS = SS for a female ego.[20]

Let us return then to the broader question of formal inconsistencies in the relationship terminology. Here the problem is focussed on cross sex sibling and affinal relations in adjacent terminological levels. This may be represented in the following diagram:



Focusing on the bilateral category mote for the moment, it is apparent that this term introduces a symmetric feature into an otherwise asymmetrically ordered relationship terminology. Does this evidence, as a purely formal matter, suggest evolutionary structural change? As Needham points out, we cannot answer this question historically. Nor can a sound judgement be made on the basis of comparative evidence from neighbouring societies since the relevant ethnographic data is either meager or non-existant. Needham's (1968:332) solution to a way out of this dilemma rests on both empirical and formal criteria. Empirically, no society has been found which organizes symmetrical marriage exchanges in combination with an unequivocal asymmetrically ordered terminology. And logically such a combination is "structurally unfeasible", although the converse is both structurally possible and empirically given. Needham's (1968, 1974) conclusion is that structural ambiguity in the terminology indicates a system in transition or evolutionary structural change, generally and ultimately from symmetric to asymmetric orders. But in the Aekyom case, this conclusion does not necessarily follow. Structural symmetry or ambiguity may be inherent features of a cultural system where

siblingship, filiation and alliance are brought together in a complex interplay in the classification of social relations.

Cultural Analysis

While formal analysis of the relationship terminology draws attention to key structural features of Aekyom social classification, cultural and linguistic data provide important information on the symbolism embedded in social categories and the relations between them. Thus my concern here is to enhance a formal structural understanding of the relationship terminology through a description of the social world in which the terminology is used and within which it acquires meanings that are not simply artifacts of formal analysis. My starting point is to describe the wider social setting of Aekyom social classification and in the process highlight certain themes that have a general bearing on the conditions and circumstances of terminological usage. Then the cultural and linguistic particulars of specific relationship categories are discussed in terms of dyadic relations. I first consider the meanings of terms and relations at alternate terminological levels since it is here that the terminology's most comprehensive metaphors assume the most focussed forms. Then the cultural presuppositions of the terminology at adjacent terminological levels are examined, followed by a discussion of the social and symbolic significance of the terminology at the medial terminological level.

The Social and Cultural Ambience.

All social relationships in Aekyom society are subject to the constraints of sex differences and age status, two factors that play a general role in the structuring of social behaviour and attitudes. They have general applicability in two related senses: first, they apply to

social statusesthroughout society and second, they impinge on individuals throughout their life cycles. As outlined in previous chapters, differences in sex entail economic, political and religious forms of separation, distancing and restraint that are common to many New Guinea societies and in particular to those of the Ok Tedi Area. Differences in age status also reflect these themes, although restraint is perhaps more accurately described in this context as well-tempered respect (tetapmen). Obviously, the attitude of respect characteristic of age differences is also applicable to relationship categories described by the relationship terminology and, therefore, may be expressed in terms of terminological levels. In this context, members of ascending terminological levels expect and generally receive respect from members of descending terminological levels. In cases where age and terminological level do not coincide it is usually age seniority that is the more critical factor in structuring the interaction, especially if the respresentative of the ascending terminological level is of a very young age.[21] Publicly the most frequently encountered forms of respect associated with age and sex are expressed verbally. The most important include the use of personal names and the exchange of verbal obscenities. As a rule and general practice, the use of personal names is asymmetrical across terminological levels: members of ascending terminological levels may address or refer to members of descending terminological levels by their personal names. The reverse is not usually observed and in some cases may be distinctly dangerous (koma, "taboo") for the user of the name. Occasionally, age seniority is the determining factor in the use of personal names if age status and terminological level do not coincide. However, this may be more a function of change in patterns of name use under Western influence than an indicator of traditional practice. On the other hand, the exchange of verbal obscenities is usually sex specific. Ribald commentary and sexual joking tend to be confined to male or female circles exclusively. However, there may be some exceptions. Verbal abuse of a sexual nature may cross sexual boundaries provided the delivery is indirect and made by a senior female member of the community. For example, one morning a large log serving as a bridge over a small creek broke under the weight of several uninitiated youths who were crossing it

single file. The next morning an old married woman who lived nearby and used the log during her daily chores was still obviously irritated by the incident. As she skillfully negotiated the muddy creek bottom, she expressed her displeasure over the inconvenience: tei kriabi gile ka sile miom myuri kei tei keiwi ("You boys were walking along this log with your pen es going up and down and that broke the log").[22] The verbal barb raised considerable laughter among both sexes within earshot but there were no expressions of shame or public censure associated with it. In stark contrast to this incident, I never heard — nor was it considered acceptable by men or women — an older man using sexually abusive language towards females, either directly or indirectly, in a mixed public. More generally, reference to the female genitals in public is considered to be improper, with one notable and amusing exception. While playing games or when frustrated over their failure to complete an activity, small or uninitiated boys frequently shout "Ah dune", dune being a slang reference to the vagina. Similar references to the vagina are also common within male circles, especially during unsuccessful hunting expeditions. While observations of expletives within female circles were obviously limited by my sex status, I never heard young girls or women engage in sexual swearing. According to both male and female informants, swearing among these age and sex categories is considered most improper.

With increasing age usually comes social maturity, wisdom, knowledge, magical powers and the honing of certain skills such as hunting, fishing, sago processing, house building, crafts, etc. However, there is a point reached when advancing age either interrupts or precludes the exercise of certain capacities and skills. For example, my observations suggest that old men in particular become an economic liability, especially when they are no longer able to hunt or assist during the sago harvest. Yet, desipte their diminishing economic contribution to the hamlet, old men retain if not increase their magical powers, and in particular their capacity for lethal sorcery (apayene). Old women, on the other hand, seem to remain economically and socially productive, at least at a level that far surpasses their male counterparts. The diversity of tasks they perform is like an insurance policy covering specific

infirmities. For example, if a leg ailment prevents the harvesting of sago or collecting of firewood, a woman can still weave the string bag to transport the sago or cook food over a wood fire. In any event, I never saw a woman who was economically inactive vis-à-vis social responsibilities unless she was on her death-bed or incapacitied to an extreme. Put another way, old women do not withdraw from economic and social life as old men might (cf. Gell, 1975).

The process of ageing is culturally recognized according to a terminology that identifies different stages of an individual's life cycle. Like the criteria of sex and age, the terms applied to these various stages are socio-centric since they have the same value for any member of the community. More importantly, they provide a linguistic focus on the phases of expanding social contacts which serves to illuminate the content of relationship categories.

Kia denotes either a male or female neonate and may be applied as a term of address[23] until the child is four or five years old. During this time, both boys and girls spend much of their time with their mothers, accompanying them on their daily routine in the house, sago gardens etc., as well as eating and sleeping with them. Occasionally, such small children will be under the care of their father – unusual by New Guinea standards (cf. Mitchell, 1978) especially when the mother is absent while harvesting sago or collecting food resources. But this is only temporary since the children continue to co-reside with the mother in the female section of the house or rine. Around the ages of four or five, children begin to negotiate the house ladder and when a boy has demonstrated his ability to do this without adult or other assistance, he is permitted to enter the men's section of the house (utio). The boy will also wear the penis case (amo) at this time and soon learns he cannot remove it in public without shame (hukwe). At this age, boys are becoming less dependent on their mother's care although economic and affective ties are still quite evident. Girls of the same age, on the other hand, continue to associate closely with their mothers and continue to wear the same type of grass skirt worn during infancy. However, both boys and girls will spend more

time with their agemates, often, though not always, with those of the same sex. During this period, a boy or girl may be called tiabuku, literally "small child"; but this term is not often used or heard. As boys and girls separate more completely in terms of the space they occupy and the activities they perform, they enter the stages of one "single boy" and tiala "single girl", respectively. As a term of address, one is applied to a boy until he successfully completes male initiation rites, traditionally in the range of 9 to 16 years of age. Boys who refer to themselves as, or call other males, one have already begun to participate in or mimic the activities of senior males, especially in the area of hunting. Although one do not pursue large game, such as cassowary, pig, monitor lizards or crocodiles, nor use men's weapons or equipment such as the black palm bow, pig traps etc., they do hunt small lizards, birds and grasshoppers by boy's bow and arrows (made from sago branches) with equal vigour, determination and accuracy. Once initiated in accordance with the formal rites, a boy (or man) may be called one duwene or "cooked" one,[24] a term of reference that reflects certain principles and stages of male initiation (cf. Gardner, 1984). Prior to his status as one duwene but following the status of kia a boy occupies variably the utio or ambine of the domestic house and the bachelors' house (kwaten knu aewe). As a kwaten knu or "initiated youth in preparation" he will reside almost exclusively in the bachelors' house (or elevated bachelors' compartment of the domestic house) high in the tree tops. During this period of his life, a male will devote his time to perfecting his hunting and (traditionally) fighting skills, observe a variety and number of food taboos associated with the status of unmarried initiate and practice formal avoidance of certain females, especially nubile girls. Upon his marriage – around the ages of 20 to 25 – he will return to the utio as a knu ("married man") or knualamena ("man with a woman").[25]

For a girl who has reached the age of tiala it will not be long before she assumes a new status. Traditionally, the upper age limit of tiala and the age of a girl's first marriage are in the range of 9 to 11 years, or as my informants put it, before the development of breasts (t'ute wirin, "no breasts") or before the onset of first menstruation (dwarin dimaepu,

"moon unseen"). Upon her marriage, a girl is called ala ("married woman") or less frequently alakoleimena ("woman with a male").

Knu and ala continue to be used as terms of reference or address throughout the child bearing years and until the death of the man or woman. If during this period they have surviving children, they are collectively referred to as tia gile mena ("family with child/children"). In the event of barrenness or deceased children they are known as tiadumkina ("without children"). On the death of a spouse, the widow is called khwiree, the widower, bropen.[26] For those men and women who die of old age, a form of death preferred by both sexes over the ubiquitous "death by malevolent sorcery", the Aekyom say they have become the kriaewe bird or pied shrike (kriaewe kra, "becoming the kriaewe bird").

As women grow old in physical appearance, wrinkling of the skin becomes pronounced and infirmities may set in. At this stage, they may be called ali ("old woman"), a term which appears to have no linguistic substitutes or parallels. Old men, on the other hand, may be called either wìké and/or monai. Interestingly, wìké ("old man") differs from the phonetically similar wíkè ("people")in terms of the tonal contrasts high (´) and low (`). Equally significant, monai is also the generic term for the "cassowary". When I asked my informants why old men are called monai they replied invariably that one should look after and feed an old man like you would a caged cassowary living beneath the domestic house. In order to clinch the comparison between old men and casowaries, some of my informants added that they are alike because of the similarity of leg structure. However, these explanations do not exhaust the cultural significance of the cassowary for the Aekyom. Nor do they shed much light on the place of monai in the relationship terminology, a problem which may now be developed and addressed.

Relationship Terms, Language and Cultural Symbolism

Like Gell (1975:Chapter 3) I have found it useful to explore the meanings of relationship terms on the basis of linguistic criteria set against a knowledge of the relevant social and cultural background. Cognitive, semantic and ideological patterns, Gell argues, may be derived from an examination of various forms of lexical motivation, including semantic, morphological and phonological types of motivation (cf. Ullman, 1963). For my purposes, the key idea is that words or segments of words (e.g., morphemes) may appear in non-arbitrary combinations which are "motivated" on the basis of underlying and general cultural principles of association. Put another way, I take it as axiomatic that language is an important but selective vehicle for the expression of collective categories (Mauss, 1923:125). Thus, while language does not register all that is significant or central in a culture it can, as Gell (1975:120-121) suggests, provide important clues vis-à-vis the culture's symbolic systems and stimulate distinctively anthropological styles of analysis. Therefore, I am not concerned here with a linguistic description of the Aekyom language. However, unlike Gell, who investigates aspects of Umeda lexical motivation with a minimal understanding of formal linguistic patterns and rules that describe the Umeda language, I was fortunate to have access to previous work on Aekyom phonetics and grammar that provided, for example, information on Aekyom verb stems and rules governing the combination of words (see Rule and Rule, 1970). As a result, rather than base judgements about Aekyom lexical items on strictly vocabulary lists or assumptions about linguistic structure, I could refer to a linguistic description of the Aekyom language for the purposes of verification as well as the development of interpretive ideas that I might not otherwise have considered.

We may now move on to the linguistic and cultural particulars of the relationship terms beginning with those categories covering alternate terminological levels.

(i) monai, kiguam, kiunkia, gutekia.

Before I explore the behaviours, attitudes and symbolism associated with these relationship terms, I should point out that the ages of males or females in alternate terminological levels is an important factor. As we have seen, terminological level is not always congruent with genealogical level and in some cases age differences beween terminological levels may span less than 20 years. But in most cases, the chronological distance between alternate terminological levels is 40 years or more. This may be attributed to both late marriage among males (especially when compared with females) as well as the relatively high frequency of polygymous marriages (see below) where senior husbands (i.e., old men) are in control of several wives and potential wives.[27] Thus, chronological or temporal distance is an important property of the category monai, consistent with both the metaphoric labelling of old men and the nature of the relationship between males of the second ascending terminological level and males or females of the second descending terminological level, all of whom may use the reciprocal terms monai in situations of address or reference.

The behaviour between senior monai (i.e., males of the second ascending terminological level) and very young junior monai (i.e., males or females of the second descending terminological level) is in many ways characterized by a certain degree of familiarity and closeness. For example, senior monai may care for junior monai (usually males) by attending to their hygenic needs.[28] Or by supervising their play and other daily activities, especially in the absence of mothers and, less frequently, fathers. Male junior monai will also spend time with their senior monai in the ambine where they may be told stories (klaeklaemen swa, "fairy tales") or shown such crafts as arrow-making or the fashioning of musical instruments such as dance rattles (kosiai). In the event of illness, senior monai give medical assistance to junior monai through the use of spells and materials characteristic of healing magic (hu). There is a sense, then, in which terminological identification between monai entails a degree of social intimacy and aid, but not to the extent that they become allies at the expense of the parental generation

(cf. Gell, 1975:145). Indeed, as both senior and junior monai continue to age, familiarity gives way to a more pronounced respect (tetapmen) which ultimately borders on "taboo" or "danger" (koma). For example both the form and content of exchange relations begin to change. Previously asymmetrical exchanges involving small gifts and services give way to symmetrical exchanges of the delayed type (see Sahlins, 1972) characteristic of distant relatives claiming the same name. Furthermore, changes in the content of exchange reflect the increasing social responsibilities of junior monai towards senior monai; by supplying the latter with drinking water, firewood and food they look after him like they would a caged cassowary. Senior monai will in turn reciprocate with services. But these are now less of a mundane nature and more concerned with religious matters. Therefore a senior monai's diminishing commitment to socio-economic productivity is offset by a more pronounced involvement in the spiritual world. Some of his activities in this sphere are regarded by the Aekyom as unquestionably positive: senior monai continue their medical practice and, for male junior monai, disseminate hunting, gardening and fishing magic as well as snipets of love magic. A somewhat more ambiguous attitude may be traced to a senior monai's ritual leadership role (tiele) in male initiation rites: while he is ultimately responsible for "making novices (one) into men" (one duwene, "cooked men"), the ritual atmosphere is one of "danger" (koma). The link between senior monai and danger, however, finds its fullest expression in the negative aspects of their magical powers. As monai advance in age the potency of their lethal sorcery is said by some informants to increase. While the powers of sorcery may be directed along channels that are seen as beneficial to the community – as in the case of war magic – they are also suspected of being directed at the community itself. My observations indicate, and informants' statements confirm, that the category of person who is first either suspected or accused of a sorcery attack within the community (i.e., a hamlet or occasionally a security circle) is invariably monai.

Such aggressive behaviours displayed during periods of warfare or by "reclusive" monai are not, it seems, inconsistent with the suspension of or withdrawal from everyday social life and a greater indentification

with a spiritual world that is inherently dangerous and sacred. In this context, the cassowary is a key symbol. Not only is it a pervasive idiom in the symbolism of warfare, but its socio-religous status in the hamlet parallels the situation of senior monai in the human community. The cassowary may be in the community, but it is not of the community in a social sense. Eternally recalcitrant to domestication, the cassowary is a dangerous, aggressive, wild creature whose proper place is in the deep jungle, the home of spirits, where it leads a generally solitary existence. It is especially striking then that the cassowary's spatio-religious distance from the human community and the conditions of its captivity (caged underneath the house) should parallel the spatio-religious status of senior monai in the hamlet. As living members of the hamlet, senior monai occupy a separate, elevated space (ambine) in the house. Following their death, they are subject to a unique form of mortuary treatment in Aekyom society: the corpse is placed beneath the house on a platform which is then fenced in.

The arrangement of cassowaries and monai in space requires further comment since the social and symbolic ordering of space provides important clues to the meaning of the relationship terms under consideration here. At the level of the hamlet, it will be recalled that houses provide a focus for the distribution of male and female social statuses in space. Considering the domestic house for the moment we find the arrangement shown in Table 18.

There is little question that a principle of vertical differentiation is used to express distinctions of sex, social and ritual status in the use of residential space. Even a casual visitor to a hamlet site cannot fail to take notice of the high position of the bachelors' quarters — or even more explicitly, the bachelors' house in the tree tops — relative to the space occupied by other hamlet members. However, it is not readily apparent that this contrast is a particularly visible aspect of a much more subtle and systematic use of spatial oppositions to express a comprehensive symbolic and cosmic order.

Table 18.

Socio-Spatial Divisions of the Hamlet Domestic House

	Spatial Category/Division			
	rine	utio	ambine	kwaten knunai
	ala	knu	monai	kwaten knu
SOCIAL/RITUAL STATUS:	tiala tiabuku kia	tiabuku tiabuku	one tiabuku	one

The basis of my argument rests on a rather casual observation but one with far-reaching social and symbolic implications. And this is that the hamlet house as a whole is closely integrated in Aekyom thought with the tree that defines and supports it. My way into the argument is to note, first of all, how the house is entered and by whom. Since I shall deal in generalities, it will prove useful to occasionally refer to Table 18 for a more detailed account.

Traditionally, passage into the house is through one of two entrances, depending on sex, social and ritual status. Women and some children invariably enter the rine or female division from below by climbing through a hole in the house floor. Men, on the other hand, usually enter the house through a hole in the front wall which relative to the women's entrance is in the area above. The binary opposition

male : female :: above : below

is not unique to Aekyom society. It is a general principle of cosmic order found elsewhere in the Ok Tedi Area and other parts of New Guinea (e.g., Barth, 1975; Herdt, 1984). For the Aekyom, this opposition is elaborated vis-à-vis the interior of the house. First, sex, age and degrees of distance are expressed by successively raised floor levels in the ambine and kwaten knunai. However, other than the vertical oppostion between men's and women's entrances to the house, it is not clear how the relationship between the utio and rine fits into this symbolic pattern. Simple observation suggests that they co-exist on a horizontal rather than vertical plane. But appearances may be deceiving as closer scrutinty of the linguistic evidence indicates. The term utio consists of the segments u and tio which denote clouds and shells (specifically egg or nut shells) respectively. Clouds clearly signify vertical distance or height, a characteristic of male space which is more concretely expressed by the bachelors' residential space, said by some to reach to the clouds (see below; cf. Austen, 1922). But what is the nature of the link with shells? Well, shells in the form of the penis case (amo) connote maleness and male space. Significantly, in addition to being a distinctive item of male attire, boys do not return to occupy the rine once they don the penis case. Equally important, shells give concrete expression to the more

abstract male property of being on the outside which stands in opposition to a distinctive female property, the inside. There are several observations that may be registered here to support the reality of this opposition. The first concerns the position of the kwaten knunai vis-à-vis the house as a whole. It is no accident that the bachelors' quarters, which accommodates males furthest removed from female space both phsycially (vertical and horizontal separation) and socially (female avoidance) should be considered by the Aekyom to be on the outside of the house. The house itself is likened to a womb (tia aewe, "child's house") whose inhabitants occupy its insides. Now, while this might appear contradictory insofar as the utio is also inside the house, it is important to point out that following the construction of a domestic hamlet house, but prior to its occupation, men perform sia dance rituals in the utio. Once this ritual is completed a magical bundle[29] is permanently placed at the entrance to the utio by the owner of the house. These rituals, which are designed to effect the transformation of gender and spatial properties from "female/inside" to "male/outside" are discussed at length in Depew (1982).

It should follow then that the rine connotes female spatial properties, and in particular the dimensions of "below" and "inside". At the most general level, we know that the rine is co-terminous with the house-as-womb, a point also indirectly confirmed by the fact that the rine does not serve as a site for ritual performance or treatment. It is also striking, however, that rine denotes not only female residential space but the deep jungle in particular. Now this part of the jungle is of interest for several interrelated reasons. First, relative to the elevated house-as-womb, it is situated below. It may be remarked in this context that dwellings located in the deep jungle (e.g., hunting house, birth and menstruation huts, male initiation house) are invariably built level to the ground or "below" the hamlet house. This practice, I think, follows from the necessity to respect the vertical pole of female space. As a result, buildings level to the ground in this environment are congruent with a wider cosmic and "moral" order.[30] Secondly, the deep jungle in particular conveys a sense of being inside something. For anyone who has ventured

into this domain, the experience of being enveloped by the jungle, of being enclosed by its dense canopy and flora, is paramount. Thirdly, the deep jungle (dei dulei, "forest spirit s") is a place that accommodates the spirits of the dead (wíkè dulei) who also reside below the ground and originate from below the ground, given the Aekyom practice of earth burial (see Chapter 5). These observations seem sufficient to confirm the nature of the oppositions between female and male space. But having established this, what bearing does it have on the relationship term monai?

First, let us return to a consideration of the cassowary ("monai") in view of the above observations and comments. It is especially striking that the cassowary, a resident of the deep jungle, which is identified with spiritual and female qualities, should be confined to an enclosed area below the hamlet house. Consistently, the cassowary itself partakes of the attributes which define its location in space. It is represented in myths, dreams and other representations as a female as well as a spiritual being with powers of transformation and spiritual rebirth. Furthermore, its physical appearance suggests to the Aekyom mind a close association with women: its bright red double wattles (tute)[31] are identified with female breasts, visually and linguistically, while its wispy tail and body feathers are its grass skirt (see also below; cf. Bulmer, 1967; Gardner, 1984; Healey, 1985; Herdt, 1981). These comments, taken together, provide significant clues as to the meaning of monai as a relationship term. It is above all else, and in general, an ambiguous cultural category. More specifically, monai is an ambiguous gender category since it is:

(i) united with males on the basis of sex;
(ii) partly separated from males on the basis of location; and
(iii) partly integrated with females on the basis of location.

This ambiguous spatial identity is reflected first of all in the living quarters of senior monai. While elevation in the ambine reflects maleness on the vertical scale it also separates monai from males in the utio. Why? The clue is provided by language. Ambine consists of the segments am and bine. Am carries the meaning "in, inside, or into" while bine in its "pure"

form bi denotes the babies of birds and animals (e.g., smel:e: bi," bird chicks", min bi, "piglets") but not of humans which are called kia, and connotes a relative age category, viz. "youngest", which is applied to tongesu ("clan") identities (e.g., Somibinkia, "youngest branch of the Somi tongesu").

Thus, while the location of monai in the house reflects female spatial properties it also suggests an identity between Aekyom and the house-as-womb. The properties "inside" (am) and "babies" (bi) suggest a locus of birth. As a symbolic extension or expression of this locus, monai must reflect, as a category, the idea of totemic birth, a cultural process and a configuration that while associated with human birth is not to be confused with it. And this for good reasons.

(i) As a cultural configuration, totemic birth combines the image of the house-as-womb with totemic names (group, individual) and their perpetuation or rebirth. It is significant then that the hamlet house should not only be distinguished on the basis of its status as primary residence for a married couple; but also that the marriage relationship should reflect totemic properties. At the level of gender, the "wife" is referred to as alakoleimena, "woman with a male", koeli also being used to identify the gender of plants and animals but not humans.

(ii) As a totemic category, monai is an ambiguous cultural category defined along the dimensions of age, gender and being, and combining the following oppositions into a systematic symbolic pattern with cosmic dimensions:

ancestor	—	descendant
old	—	young
male	—	female
human	—	spirit
above	—	below
outside	—	inside

This pattern is given concrete summary form in the way the Aekyom think about and use trees as a locus of residential space. Hamlet houses assume totemic, animate status, first of all by acquiring a name which is peculiar to the house but not identical to the personal names of the owner/builder by which the house may also be known. The personal names of houses are usually derived from the name of the tree whose trunk (bute, also meaning "human body") is used to raise it above the ground and support it. Thus the house is not simply a material modification of the tree but an extension of its being/existence. It follows, then, that like the tree which the Aekyom say reaches from beneath the ground where it is anchored by its roots (dei dulei) to the sky where its upper trunk (su) and branches (dei gia) touch the clouds, the house mediates symbolic/cosmic categories and levels. If this is so, movement between cosmic levels by ascent or descent on house ladders or differential location in house space, must entail fundamental changes in character or crucial differences in identity that reflect cosmic metamorphosis and states. And one would expect, at least for certain categories and types of movement, that ritual attention be given to those points where ingress and egress between levels is made possible, such as openings or orifices. Thus, the identity of the house is not limited to a simple organization of physical space. By naming the house the Aekyom bring it into harmony with the (totemic) structures of their life-world (Schutz, 1962) and give it a more meaningful identity. As such, the structuring of social activities in and around the house should reflect and reaffirm the cosmic order and its attendant values (Needham, 1962:95).

We should now be in a favourable position to provide interpretations of the remaining relationship terms that may be substituted for monai. I shall consider first the term kiguam, which is applied to males of the second ascending terminological level. Like monai, the term kiguam can be broken down into elementary segments of a meaningful kind.[32] The morpheme ki is straightforward enough. It is derived from the adjective kimin, meaning "hot" (of objects or beings)[33] and the verb kikra "to become hot" (kra = "to make, to become") as in the phrase teiya no kikra, "the sun is making me hot" (literally, "the sun is hotting me"). These

associations are of special interest because of their totemic implications. For example, t'ei means "sun", a celestial body which the Aekyom classify as a mother (aemae). Thus t'ei combines the properties of heat/fire, female gender and reproductivity. T'ei is also phonetically close to tei meaning Aekyom "first clan" or a category of being. Is this simply a linguistic accident having little to do with the meaning of kiguam and its totemic ambience? Or is there a deeper connection that reciprocally informs t'ei and tei with symbolic sense?

To the Aekyom, heat or fire is a supernatural power that transforms and is transformable. As a medium of transformation, fire is put to domestic and practical use to change raw food into cooked food. Simlarly, its ritual/symbolic role is to turn boys (novices) into men (initiates) during male initiation rites. As an object of transformation, fire is transformable into other beings. For example, when I enquired about the origin of birds of paradise, I was told a story (song swa) about the first man and creator, Wi, who in the context of the first male initiation rites created the birds of paradise. Significantly, Wi set fire to the hollow of a tei tree whose flames, bursting through the top of the tree, turned into birds of paradise. Now according to the myth as well as informants' statements, these brightly coloured birds are assigned female gender. This point merits a brief comment on aspects of Aekyom ornithology and male initiation rites since they are germane to my present concerns.

The Aekyom, like some other New Guinea peoples (e.g., Feld, 1982) reverse the gender identities of birds of paradise when compared to their gender categorization by Western ornithologists. Brightly coloured birds of paradise are said to be female (worin aengei) while male birds of paradise (worin kolei) are recognized as being their dull- or brown-coloured mates. The myth in question is of special interest insofar as the birds of paradise emerge as females in male space (from above, in the tree tops). Furthermore, there is an unmistakable identification of male initiates with birds of paradise which is emphasized at the completion of male initiation rites.[34] This series of totemic identifications nicely ties together the themes of the transformational and supernatural powers of

fire, rebirth, female gender and initiated men who, following marriage, succeed their fathers or kiguam within named tongesu or teinam and inherit the hamlet house.

All of this, of course, is premised on the religious or spiritual status of kiguam or monai as well as of the actors being initiated and married. The spiritual character of kiguam is reflected in the morpheme guam. At the most general level, guam in its post-position is used to personify or anthropomorphize supernatural beings and natural forces that in complementary relationships form cycles. For example, one interesting category of superhuman is smuguam, a term that applies equally to his/her form as "husband" or "wife". According to my informants, smuguam lives under the bent branches and leaves of black palm trees that reach the ground or in holes in the river bank. Because of their white skin (dmekina) they are like spirits of the dead who also live underground. Equally significant, they parallel the tiele (the ritual role assumed by kiguam in male initiation rites) in terms of transformational powers: they may transform themselves into wandu or asia, respectively, the two largest monitor lizards in the Aekyom region, which are found in the rine.[35]

Guam is also the personifying element of Hunguam "Night Man" and Akunguam "Day Man" who, according to Aekyom mythology, once lived apart.[36] However, they were brought together or rather Akunguam was introduced to the transitional period between night and day by the fire and light of Hunguam's tree resin torch (pan ri). Subsequently, Akunguam "lived the life of Hunguam" by experiencing the cycle of day and night. Significantly, guam itself may be further analysed in terms of its constituent elements gu and am. The latter segment, as an adjective, connotes the spatial dimension "inside". Gu however, is somewhat more problematic to interpret as I could find no linguistic unit "outside" the relationship terminology itself which could shed some light on the matter. Nevertheless, as a toponym gu is associated with tributaries of the Fly River: as the Aekyom say, Gu creek is the "daughter" (gute) of the Fly River, its "mother" (aemae). Gu then suggests the idea of a female line of

filiation, or a point/link among female lines of filation. This interpretation seems consistent, then, with the gender status of kiguam/monai, a term which taken as a whole also suggests a spiritual connotation for gu.

The arrangement of symbolic oppositions listed above for monai, together with themes of fire and totemic rebirth, go a considerable way in informing my interpretation of the relationship terms kiunkia and gutekia. Let us first consider kiunkia. This term consists of the linguistic units kiun and kia. Kia, as already demonstrated, refers to a neonate or young child who occupies in succession the birth hut (tia aewe) in the jungle (rine) and the rine or women's quarters of the hamlet domestic house. These observations complement the dual gloss of kiun. On the one hand, kiun denotes the black water python, which as a snake is a classic symbol of rebirth in New Guinea in general and among the Aekyom in particular. It is also a universal idiom for the expression of immortality, a property shown by the other denotation of kiun. Kiun also refers to the stone axe blade which is owned and inherited by men. Significantly, the lines of transmission are strictly adhered to, stone axe blades being passed from FF or MF (kiguam) to SS or DS (kiunkia or gutekia). Now this is an important point since we are in the realm of totemic relations. More specifically, the symbolism of stone axe blades (and snakes) has an important bearing on the meaning of tongesu, tei and teinam and their linguistic parallels.

This disucssion takes us back, initially, to a consideration of the properties of the sun. The sun, tei, combines the following features:

(i) heat/fire
(ii) light
(iii) female gender
(iv) maternity
(v) constancy/immortality

As a mother, the sun must of course have, or give birth to, a child. According to Aekyom mythology and everyday commentary, the sun's child is the moon, dwarin, which the Aekyom say is her son (tia). Now, the

sun's (mother's) daily duty is to cook the tei animals (possum, cuscus, rat, bandicoot) which her son, the moon, shoots and kills at night. When they are cooked, moon eats the tei animals. If we consider the polysemous character of tei and its semantically motivated (phonologically motivated) relationship to tei (sun) these identities and events have important implications for totemism in Aekyom society.

On the one hand, the cooked meat of tei animals sustains moon's life. Yet, the shooting and killing of them presages his own death since moon too belongs to tei. This gustatory identification with the meat of tei animals is consistent with the "cooked" status of initiated men who fully inherit, upon marriage, their group or tongesu (ancestral tei) status. The cycle of life and death, birth and killing, defined at the level of tei, is concisely expressed in terms of the relationship between sun (mother) and moon (son). In contrast to the sun's constancy of form or immortality, the moon grows and dies, waxes and wanes. But throughout this cycle, moon retains a significant aspect of his mother's identity: he retains the property of light. In fact, light is the first sign of moon's rebirth or resurrection from darkness. But it is a totemic rebirth since the preconditions of life and death are all defined at the level of tei.

This takes us back to the maternal role of sun who as a reproductive mother cooks life-sustaining meat for her son. The connection between reproduction and cooking meat within the context of sustaining and reproducing the tongesu is revealed by the place of stone in the overall symbolic scheme. Cooking is made possible through the generation of heat or fire. Traditionally the Aekyom made fire by friction or by rubbing together the stones called tonge. The Aekyom refer to this act by the phrase ike tila which means literally "to scratch stones". However, the verb tila also refers to sexual intercourse, an event that in Aekyom belief and society not only precedes childbirth but is said to be exclusive to reproduction. Insofar as stone is tied to the process of reproduction, the interpretation of kiunkia as "child of the stone axe blade" seems reasonable.[37] But stone is also a sign or product of reproduction. As noted earlier, the Fly River Aekyom claim that the first stone axe blades came

from a pig, or more specifically a maternal pig inhabiting the deep forest (rine). It is far from arbitrary or simply a fact of empirical observation that the Aekyom should describe the new moon as min pete, "pig tusk". As a type of bone,[38] teeth like stone are immortal, a property associated with female gender and spiritual qualities. Furthermore, they are white or yellowish-white, colours that the Aekyom associates with inhabitants of female space (e.g., land of the dead) or light (fire) itself.[39] And finally, as dog's teeth, they define lines of inheritance between men that are mediated by female statuses (e.g., mother, daughter).

(ii) ahwi, kiunkia/gutekia

Age is also an important factor in considering the relationship category ahwi and its social substitute, ali. The traditional practice of girls marrying at a young age is likely to result in less of an age discrepancy between ahwi and members of the second descending terminological level, than between senior and junior monai, especially if children are born relatively early. Between ahwi and kiguam there may be a chronological difference of 10 to 20 years or more. Be that as it may, "aged" is also a cultural if not always a biological attribute of ahwi, since its equivalent or substitute term ali is also used as a general term for "old woman" regardless of the type of ego-centred relationship under consideration. One implication of the relative younger age of ahwi is that women in this category are often much more active in social and economic activities that are consistent with the status of wife or mother than are men, classified as kiguam, in relation to the status of husband and father. For example, ahwi may perform many of the same tasks of kiunkia/gutekia as does a mother for tia or gute. In some cases, ahwi may substitute for the mother (aemae) in the realm of domestic chores. But such substitutions do not occur unconditionally. The main determining factor in this context is residence. Ahwi of the genealogical specifications FeBW, FM, FMZ, MFZ are more likely to perform tasks similar to ego's mother's since they often share hamlet residence with ego as "in-marrying" women. In contrast, ahwi of the genealogical specification MM, MeZ, MMZ, FMBW are less likely to do so since they are more likely to be

residents of another hamlet. But in some cases, joint ownership of a hamlet by different tongesu brings together ahwi of a variety and number of kinship and affinal categories. Frequently, ahwi serve as caretakers on either a temporary or more permanent basis, depending on the work schedule and presence or absence of aemae. Ahwi may also tend to the hygenic needs of k[illegible]kia/gutekia and in the event of the latter's illness will provide medical attention. Similar to "old men", "old women" usually have knowledge of various magical spells, medicinal substances and techniques which they apply with greater potency and effect as they advance in age. But increases in absolute age for ahwi, kiunkia and gutekia does not appreciably change the nature of the relationship between them. But while their relationship remains relatively close affectively and economically, its original asymmetric character becomes more symmetrical as "grandchildren" increasingly provide goods and services for their "grandmothers". This change reflects the parallel development of personal skills and social responsibilities among members of the second descending terminological level.

Ahwi is one of the few relationship terms for which my informants offered any kind of interpretation on linguistic and sociological grounds. On serveral occasions I was told, "We call her ahwi because she collects the kindling wood (hwi) for the fireplace". This association is, I think, less a reflection of the material conditions of life than it is a symbolic statement about the totemic status of ahwi. Put another way, ahwi is to be interpreted within a transformational rather than a utilitarian setting. Like kiguam/monai, the ultimate source of death (via his control of lethal sorcery), ahwi is involved in a dialectic of transformation into opposites. Ahwi/ali is inextricably bound to the cycle of life and death and the continuity of life forms, both human and spiritual. This is suggested first of all by her participation in spiritual forms of healing. More generally, ahwi and kiunkia/gutekia are bound together on the basis of complementary relationships. The associated concept of transformation is concretely expressed when complementary objects, forms, qualities and processes are brought together. Thus kindling wood, a sign of a dead tree,[40] is transformed into a giver of life, namely heat or fire, in

conjunction with the friction between immortal fire stones. Linguistically or symbolically, it is not by chance that a bird called hwihwi, contained within a hollow bamboo tube (i.e., inside, in female space) heralds the transition from day to night in the story about Hunguam and Akunguam cited above. Moreover, Aekyom mythology provides supporting evidence for both the fusion of ali ("old woman") with ahwi, and their connection to kiguam or monai ("old man"), and the nature of the relationship between alternate terminological levels. In a tale about the origin of sorcery, the "old man" wìké Wi is swallowed by ali. But when she is shot (and killed) by bow and arrow, ali regurgitates Wi in the form of a newborn baby (kia). Wi then grows up and teaches the Aekyom all about lethal sorcery.

(iii) ai, tia

As is generally the case for dyadic relationships in Aekyom society, aging has an effect on the form and content of relationships between father (ai) and son(tia). When his son is an infant or toddler, the father frequently plays the role of guardian and caretaker, especially when the mother has gone into the bush to collect food or process sago. Fathers may be seen playing with their sons, indulging in their mischief and carrying them around on their shoulders. Not surprisingly, during this time, sons develop strong emotional attachments to their fathers and often become visibly upset if the latter should set out on a hunting expedition or a trip to Kiunga or some other community without them. More than once did I see very young boys engage in fits of crying on these occasions; at other times they might wander through the village/hamlet looking for their fathers and crying out in apparent distress, yaio, "his father!", over and over again (cf. Gell, 1975). Usually, however, sons can be seen accompanying their fathers during their daily routine. They may be seen together in the vegetable garden, travelling by canoe to fishing sites or simply enjoying one another's company around the hamlet house. Sons may also go with their fathers to the sago gardens where they will be cared for by their fathers as their mothers work the sago. As his son grows older and enters adolescence, the father introduces him to the more serious side of his socialization. The boy now learns the rudiments

of certain skills such as hunting, fishing and gardening, and is taught how to use and paddle a canoe, an exlcusively male possession. Social control in the form of criticism and advice are more conspicuous at this time and will continue throughout the duration of the relationship. However, it may be noted here that the mother's brother (aepua) will assume most of these responsibilities vis-à-vis his sister's son when the latter approaches the age for male initiation and will continue to be an important agent of social control, along with the father, in the boy's later years.

Cooperative relations are also a predominant feature of the relationship between father and son, especially in political economic and religious spheres. Traditionally, sons were relied upon for support in the context of warfare, and usually side with their fathers in domestic disputes, especially over issues of property ownership and use. Solidarity between father and son at this level is also reflected in the atmosphere of generalized reciprocity (e.g., Sahlins, 1972). With the exception of specific magical substances and ritual bundles that are stored in specially-made string bags, most personal property, including tools, weapons, artifacts and foods may be given as gifts (dae) without expectations of a return or borrowed without prior permission. Moreover, sons often inherit their father's property, including personal items, economic trees, gardens, dwellings, etc. A son may also count on his father to supply him with magic spells and formulas for growing vegetables and trees and to administer spiritually-induced remedies for various illnesses, aches and pains. However, this does not exhaust the father's religious significance. Even in the context of hunting large game in the deep forest, the father-son relationship may transcend the practical and ritual constraints of hunting alone: the dead father's spirit will assist and guide the son in preparation for and during the pursuit.

As discussed in Chapter 3, many spheres of social life display a cultural emphasis on agnatic relationships among men. Both Aekyom language and symbolism confirm this and also show that agnatic ties or the concept of agnation have their focus in the relationship category ai. As

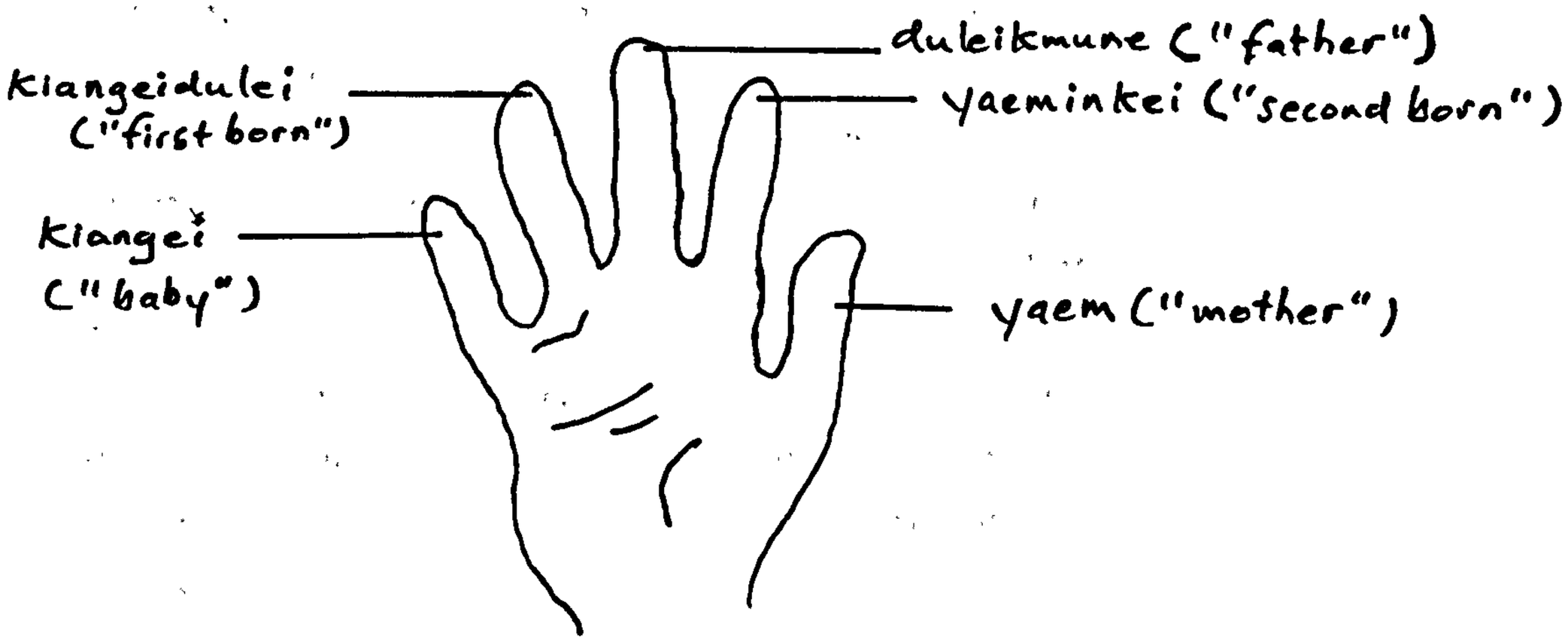
an element of language, ai ("father") is closely related to the verb stem ai which means "to grow up big and tall". These two elements are fused, for example, in the symbolism of the fingers. The hand as a whole is presented in Diagram 3.

The middle finger is duleikmune, the "father", who stands in opposition to yaem, the "mother" (literally "his/her mother") which is identified with the thumb. According to my informants, the middle finger is "tall and erect like the father", while the thumb is "short and fat like a pregnant Aekyom mother". Analytically, the opposition

tall : short :: male : female

is consistent with the more general differentiation of male and female space in terms of a vertical dimension. The association of the "father" (ai) with the "middle finger" (duleikmune) is also expressed by a linguistic-symbolic formula. Duleikmune may be broken down into the segments dulei meaning "middle" and kmune, which denotes the "tall and erect" smoking platform anchored to the fireplace below. Significantly, the kmune is used to smoke meat and arrowshafts, two items identified with metaphors of agnation and maleness. This particular cultural configuration would seem to shed some light on the symbolism of two other specific fingers. Kiangeidulei, the ring finger, is the "first born", flanked by the "father" and kiangei, the "baby". My informants commented that kiangeidulei is the "first born" because it is the tallest of the "father's children", while kiangei, being the shortest, is the "baby". However, there is another interesting connection with the "father". Both the "first born" and the "baby" share the root kiangei which, I think, may be a compound of kia meaning "child" and gei, the abbreviated form of the verb geisili, meaning "to roast". As noted previously, cooking and fire in general have symbolic value in domestic and ritual spheres where procreation and cultural transformation are regarded as necessary for agnatic succession and identity. Thus the metaphor of cooked (i.e., smoked, roasted, etc.) meat is especially appropriate vis-à-vis identification with the father. Taken as a unit, the middle, ring and baby fingers stand in opposition to the thumb ("mother") and the index finger. The latter, called yaeminkei ("next to the mother"), is said by the Aekyom

Diagram 3
The Symbolism of the Hand



to represent the "second born" since it is shorter than the "first born" and literally next to the "mother" or thumb. It is also striking that yaeminkei contains no metaphoric reference to "cooked meat" , a linguistic and symbolic deficiency which confirms its association with the "mother" as well as its cultural distance from the "father".[41]

The procreative symbolism of the hand as a whole is not only reflected in its other linguistic-symbolic distinctions but reappears as a general cultural theme throughout New Guinea. The palm of the hand, for example, is called the "stomach", gene, an association consciously made by the Aekyom, while the wrist, tu, connotes a locus for procreation also suggested by its other denotata such as tree tops (which bear fruit and nuts) and the head-waters of rivers. These distinctions are consistent with the identification of the middle finger-as-father with a phallus, both symbolically and mechanically.[42] It would appear then that we are in the presence of an integrated system of thought where experiential realms that we in Western society tend to regard as discrete are brought together. Indeed,

> The link between land, food and the body perceived by Papua New Guineans is generally as much metaphysical and symbolic as it is an understanding of nutrition and physiology. The land itself and the hands which produce the food are as much a part of the growing child's body as the food nutrients (Welsch et al., 1980:167).

Ai is also a segment of aisu, meaning "father's people" or "father's stalk". In this context, agnatic connection is appropriately expressed by the symbolism of the tree grub (psene), a totemic species, which in the case of sago grubs inhabit and undergo metamorphosis in the stalk (su) of a sago log. Significantly, the first developmental stage of the grub is called yai, "his father", which is also a reference to its relationship with the subsequent metamorphic phases of the grub while it is encased in a nest (hio) made from the surrounding sago pith. This symbolism is paralleled by aspects of the relationship terminology since a father and son may use ai as a reciprocal term of address. These observations point towards a cultural emphasis on the continuity of the father-son

relationship in particular, and the agnatic group in general, across the generations. This tends to be reinforced by the naming system. Members of the "father's stalk" or aisu may be indentified on the basis of a shared group name and in terms of the distribution of personal names: a son takes his father's personal first name as his personal second name (see Chapter 5 for details). Yet names do not unequivocally provide the basis of intimacy between father and son. Most importantly, a son must avoid using his father's personal names in situations of address or reference. This element of restraint parallels the ambivalence and possible friction that may characterize the relationship between father and son, especially in the context of marriage and affinity. While public dispute or violent behaviour between father and son are rare, a traditionally short supply of marriageable women and wives and subsequent competition for them might seriously, if only temporarily, undermine the integrity of their relationship. In other contexts, marriage and affinal relatives punctuate or provide the prerequisites for agnatic continuity. For example, during male initiation rites, the aepua (MB) plays a key role inside the komenai or male initiation house, which the father is not, traditionally, permitted to enter during his son's initiation. Furthermore, relationships with matrilateral relatives have an important bearing on naming practices and their implications for the status of the agnatic group as a named descent group. This, as will be demonstrated later, is reflected in the symbolism of sago grub reproduction and the cultural meaning of individual and group names in Aekyom society.

(iv) ai, gute

The general criterion of sex affects the relationship between a man, his daughter or sister's daughter. They do not, for example, share living quarters nor form economic pairs within the wider division of labour. Nevertheless, the relationship between ai and gute is affective and instrumental in a way that resembles the relationship between ai and a pre-adolescent tia. It is not unusual to see a father caring for his young daughter, especially in the mother's absence. He plays with her, carries her around on his shoulders or tends to her needs while the family or a

group of families work the sago garden. Similarly, a daughter may accompany her father on brief food gathering outings and contribute to the collection of resources. Yet the aim of this and other economic activites in which the father is involved is to provide for his daughter or assist in meeting her needs. At times the ai's role may range from assuming responsibility for the general welfare of this gute to comforting his daughter whenever the opportunity should arise. Often, when she is tired, a father will cradle his daughter in his lap where she may drift off to sleep.

In general, ageing does not greatly change the characteristic affective relationship between a father and his daughter, although certain tasks or responsibilities may cease.[43] A major milestone in their relationship, however, occurs when the girl reaches marriageable age (around 9 to 11 years old). It is especially at this time that she is under her father's control as it is usually the father who plays the major hand in the direction of her marriage. A man's involvement with his daughter at this level, however, is not strictly utilitarian. For example, he is sensitive to her wishes regarding the choice of a marriage partner, since infant betrothal, traditionally a frequent practice, is not always a fait accompli. More importantly, he participates in the marriage ceremonies which draw father and daughter into a wider spiritual association. Following her marriage, the daughter usually resides virilocally, a residence practice that often separates her from her father's house. Nevertheless, she will be accompanied by her husband, while frequenting her father's hamlet to provide goods and services such as collecting food, water and firewood and making sago. In this economic context, the relationship between father and daughter is continuous throughout the duration of their relationship.

Affectivity between a father and daughter may occasionally reach extreme proportions. During my fieldwork, I recorded several cases of alleged incestuous relationship (iyaeloyo) between father and daughter. Although it is not regarded by the Aekyom with horror (cf. Lévi-Strauss, 1969), incest is considered to be asocial and unworthy of human beings

(see below). My impression, however, is that the girl is often forced by the father into committing these acts (see also Chapter 6). Similarly, marriage between a man and his gute (i.e., sister's daughter, classificatory sister's daughter, or father's sister's daughter) is considered not to be a "good marriage" but is, nevertheless, tolerated by the local community.

(v) bule, tia

The relationship between a man and his elder brother's children parallel in many respects the relationship between a father and his children. Such parallels may in fact converge when, for instance, a bule adopts (kiadimku sila) his tia on the death of the latter's ai. Although a relationship of foster father/foster children holds between them, the conventional agnatic terminology prevails. However, this seems to be more a function of the status of tia within the agnatic group than the position of bule and tia in the relationship terminology. Linguistically, the term tia like the term ai suggests a close association with dimensions of agnation and maleness. Morphemically, tia seems to be linked to tiwe, meaning "outside" and t'i, meaning "on, on top of". Bule, on the other hand, is similar to bule, which denotes the strap of a string bag. Among the Aekyom, string bags (gwae) are inherently female, being made by women from fibres obtained from the inside layers of tree bark (ɗoke) and referred to as "wombs".[44] This linguistic parallel suggests the closeness of bule to images of the mother rather than to those of the father, a proposition confirmed by the symbolism of the hand as well as by the categorization of MH as bule.[45] Moreover, aspects of terminological usage between FyB and eBeS in particular reflects the closeness of the latter to key agnatic and totemic relationship categories: bule will sometimes address his male tia as ai or aebi.

The distance between bule and tia may be expressed at other social levels. Morally and economically, tia are less obligated to their bule than to other agnatic categories to provide the former with goods and services. While this does not necessarily undermine their agnatic solidarity which in

most cases is undeniable, it does underscore the general observation that there is a "line of demarcation" within the agnatic unit that pivots on age differences and their relationship to categories of descent.

(vi) aemae, gute

This is the first dyadic relationship considered so far in which both parties to the relationship share residential space throughout the formative years of the younger party. Being united in space, economic and domestic cooperation is a conspicious feature of this relationship, which is continuously and sharply defined. Furthermore, it affords the opportunity for aemae and gute to develop strong affective ties.

By the age of three or four, a daughter is completely weaned but it will be another two years or so before she begins to make a contribution to female subsistence activities, usually under the guidance of her mother. The most important of these is unquestionably the production of sago. Mother and daughter work closely in the sago garden, dividing tasks according to experience and ability. While a young girl is not usually strong enough to leach the sago, she will make a substantial contribution to sago production by extracting the raw pith from the sago log. In addition to the techniques of sago making, a mother will show her daughter or sister's daughter how to make grass skirts and string bags, and direct her in the collection of bush foods, fishing and vegetable gardening.

By the age of 9 or 10, a gute has learned and can perform many of the tasks expected of a wife. While a mother seems to have less control over the marriage of her daugher compared to the father, she will nevertheless exercise considerable influence vis-à-vis marriage choices and will be involved in the marriage ceremonial, either directly or indirectly. It is after marraige that mother and daughter may become spatially separated. But she may return with her husband to her father's hamlet where she will once again assist her mother in domestic tasks or care for her if she should become incapacitated for any reason.

In situations of address, aemae may be abbreviated to mae. But this does not substantially affect the linguistic import of either relationship term. Aemae seems to be a derivative of the verb stem ae which means "to sleep or lie down". While this connotation may seem curious at first, a brief examination of its wider field of reference should make the connection much clearer. Ae also appears as the root of gwae (string bag) and aewe (hamlet house). In Aekyom thought, the relationship of these items of material culture to the human world rests on their life-sustaining functions, which either coincide with or parallel one another. String bags, for example, are an important focus for shelter and comfort, food and eating, medicine and healing, all of which are closely associated with child development and general life processes, including sleeping. Similarly, the house serves these functions but on a much larger scale. Thus, metaphorically and metonymically these functions are concentrated in the image of the mother.[46] As the mother is the primary source of cooking and nurture, it is only a short step to the idea of sleeping and comfort, especially when it is realized that like elsewhere in New Guinea, food among the Aekyom serves as a narcotic that induces sleep. But there is another significant and related dimension to sleeping and lying down ("comfort"): the connection with female space. On a vertical scale, it means being in a position below, in contrast to standing up, tall, above Furthermore, sleeping always occurs inside something — a house, a womb, a string bag, a nest, an egg, etc. It is a reasonable expectation then that the mother should also be involved in spiritual matters, particularly as a mediator. Not surprisingly, mothers frequently practice spiritual healing on their daughters within the confines of the house, and give birth to children in the bush inside a hut.[47]

Gute, as pointed out earlier, is a much more difficult term to interpret on a linguistic basis. It is linked, however, to toponyms that point to the close association between mother and daughter. Tributaries of the Fly River, for example, are the "daughters of their mother", respectively. Perhaps as a reflection of their close identity, the Aekyom find acceptable a man's successive marriages to a mother and her daughters (by another husband).

(vii) aemae, tia

I have already explored the relationship between aeme and tia as it is projected into the celestial realm. It is perhaps sufficient at this point to "round out" the character of the relationship with some additional background social information.

Despite sex differences between them, aemae and tia are co-residents in the house rine during the boy's early years. During this time a young boy is entirely dependent on his mother and, to a lesser extent, his father for food, security and protection. This dependency decreases as the boy matures. However, it is common to see adolescent boys, bachelors and even married men go to their mothers for cooked sago, a theme that is elevated to the level of ritual, song and dance (see Depew, 1982). In any event, those tia who remain in their father's hamlet will continue to rely on their mothers for cooked sago, meat and other foods.[48] Thus, while they remain spatially separated like the mother-sun and son-moon, aemae and tia remain closely interrelated in the cycle of male and female activity.

(viii) aepua, aentmin

The relationship between aepua (MB, WF) and aentmin (ZS, DH) is characterized by a considerable degree of structural ambiguity at social, ritual and symbolic levels. On the one hand, as a matrilateral relative (MB), the aepua takes an active interest in the social development of his aentmin. This is especially the case where a boy's father and mother's brother co-reside in the same hamlet. Under these conditions it is not unusual for the aepua to act as aentmin's guardian on occasion, to assist him in the development of social skills and to cooperate in economic spheres. More importantly, the aepua relates to his aentmin on a ritual and spiritual level. For example, aentmin may seek the medical attention of his aepua in the event of serious illness. This may involve the administration of magical spells and substances, and other forms of spirit communication such as "shamanic/" trance and divination, usually under

the influence of smoking tobacco (skupe). At other times, medical practice is carried out in the wider context of sia song and dance performances[49] where a man should always dance with his aepua (cf. Schwimmer, 1984). Equally important is the role of the aepua vis-à-vis aentmin's initiation into the status of one duwene. At this time, aepua will increasingly assume responsibility for the boy's discipline and instruction in religious matters. However, the aepua's influence will extend into other cultural and social spheres, providing a significant foundation for their enduring relationship. If this relationship should be terminated by the death of the aentmin, it is the aepua's duty to dig the grave with the mome digging stick.

While relations between aepua and aent min are frequently "free and easy" they are also characterized by considerable restraint and respect. This seems to be less a function of age differences between them than the nature of the relationship itself. Mythological scenarios, for example, are frequently developed in terms of the theme of respect between aepua and aentmin. Invariably, dire consequences befall a disrespectful aentmin. Similarly, but more seriously, it is distinctly dangerous (koma) to address or refer to the aepua by using his personal names.

These constraints apply to all genealogical specifications of the relationship category aepua. However, when the aepua is also the WF, there are additional important dimensions to the nature of the relationship. Prior to sustained contact, if the WF's hamlet was located outside the DH's "security circle", it was not unusual for pre-defined hostilities to exist between them. These might be attenuated but not entirely eliminated by the marriage relationship and the economic obligations of the DH to the WF. As my informants put it, "You are always giving food and your labour (e.g., house building and gardening services) to your WF". However, it is striking that articulation of the relationship between aent min and aepua should focus not on the conditions and circumstances of practical sociology or marriage alliances, but on ritual contexts: e.g., male initiation, name avoidance, sia song and dance, mortuary practices and marriage rites. Significantly, the

underlying religious connotations of the relationship terms are reflected in language.

The terms aentmin and aepua share the preposition ae which, as I have pointed out already, is derived from the verb stem ae, meaning "to sleep". Among the Aekyom sleeping is regarded as a transitional state, traditionally identified with the spiritual realm. For example, dreams (an deone) occur during sleep and invariably involve the spiritual wanderings of the dreamer. Sleep takes place in the house (aewe) which is a locus of transitions and mediation, a fact also suggested by the Aekyom practice of building "houses" over graves. The mother (aemae) is perhaps the archetype of transition: transforming menstrual blood ("death") into babies ("life"),[50] raw food into cooked food through the application of heat (aeke), etc. Thus a common feature of the relationship between aentmin and aepua is their mutual assocation with states of transition and relations of transformation. This property is confirmed by the meaning of tmin, an identifiable linguistic segment of aentmin. Tmin denotes a type of cultivated sago palm. But it is a special type of sago palm since it is also a totemic category: according to Aekyom mythology, humans have been transformed from the tmin sago. The symbolic threads of Aekyom totemic categories are, therefore, slowly being drawn together when it is recalled that sago grubs, or certain metamorphic stages of the grub, represent agnatic relations. But what bearing does this have on the relationship between aentmin and aepua, who are members of different agnatic groups? And how does the idea of transformation fit into this symbolic formula?

Let us return to a consideration of aepua. This term also consists of the segment pua. There is little doubt that it is derived from puen, meaning "corpse", which the Aekyom consciously compare to a "dead log" such as a sago log that is used to grow sago grubs.

Therefore, it is a reasonable expectation that aepua (MB) be a pivotal category vis-à-vis life and its generation from death. As a corollary of this, it should also reflect totemic properties.

In addition to aepua, the MB or WF is also addressed or referred to as mome. This term's field of denotation is especially interesting since it has a general bearing on the notions of mediation and transition. First, mome refers to the central posts of the hamlet aewe, which are co-extensive with the irine or partition that separates but also unites (especially through its holes, inam) male and female sections of the house, men and women. Secondly, mome denotes the mortuary digging stick used by a aepua/mome to dig the grave of his aent.min.[51] As an extension of the grave-digger's being, the mome digging stick draws the MB/WF into close contact with the categories of death and spirituality. This idea is confirmed by the nature of "mome's" third denotation: mome is also the generic term for "fly".

In Aekyom thought, flies are inextricably bound to the categories of rot, death, and regeneration, primarily through their association with excrement and other rotting/rotten substances (cf. Lévi-Strauss, 1969 [illegible]). This connection was firmly driven home to me when in the midst of frequenting the local latrine flies came streaming out the latrine hole from below the ground. When I was then reminded by the Aekyom that "grubs" hatch from flies' eggs (snolei) that have been laid in excrement a number of puzzling aspects of Aekyom symbolism began to fall into place. First, it is not simply for reasons of privacy or shame that latrines are enclosed in a house-like enclosure. Houses, it will be recalled, are loci of transitions. Second, corpses and excrement are both beneath the ground, where the spirits, transformed from death into "life", reside, also in houses. Significantly, only the bones (signs of immortality) of kiguam or monai ("old men") are "buried" in the latrine where they lie among excrement. It should follow then that the descendants of "flies" or fly products and their environment have a particularly important bearing on Aekyom totemism and categories of descent.

The first confirming evidence is found in Aekyom mythology. Here the descendants and members of the Solei tongesu (Runai village, North Awin) trace their origin to the emergence of a boy from a fly's egg that

had been laid on a white cockatoo feather. Yet, according to the myth, the Solei take their name from a foreign woman (a Yonggom) who first "mothers" the boy then later marries him. From this marriage were born all members of the Solei tongesu (see below and Chapters 5 and 6). The second level of supporting evidence takes us back to the significance of sago and sago grub symbolisms for agnation and descent. Sago grubs emerge from the eggs of mome yaem didiyolei, "fly-mother of the sago grubs" which are laid in the rotting sago log. From here, the grubs migrate to the stalk (su) where they feed on sago pith and build their nests (hiowe). Subsequently, they will go through the various metamorphic stages towards their maturity as an insect (singei). Thus, the birth, growth and development of the sago grub parallels a process which in Aekyom thought is characteristic of the cycle of rebirth:

life ("mother fly") ⟶ death (rotting log) ⟶ rebirth (sago grub).

Let us now return to the relationship terminology.

If we assume that Aekyom kinship is really about relationship categories rather than merely genealogical ties then we may establish (hypothesize) certain structural equations that shed considerable light on the articulation of the more general categories of kinship, gender, and cosmos. The remaining clues to the form this equation takes may be found in the relationships term gutekolei as well as in variants of a term that is used to describe aentmin as a collectivity.

As noted earlier, gutekolei is a compound of the segments gute and kolei. Previously I have made little headway in the interpretation of gute from a linguistic point of view. However, with sufficient social and cultural information as background, a reasonable interpretation is now at hand. First, the sociological context. It may be seen from the social classification that gute is a relationship term circumscribed by the cross sex sibling relationship. Put another way, the relationship between brother and sister provides the most comprehensive focus for gute as a term of descendance. The conceptual emphasis on descendance here seems to be reflected in the linguistic segment te which describes categories of time. Significantly, te means "yesterday" and "tomorrow", a temporal

ambiguity which may also be understood in terms of a transitional category. This parallels the cultural distinction of tributaries as gute, as "daughters" of a larger river or "mother" which therefore give geographical expression to the continuous and discrete properties of such categories. But this cultural distinction also draws our attention to the notions of birth and life. According to my informants, the Fly River (wai duo) gives birth to its tributaries. That gute as a compound linguistic term is "about life and birth" is also reflected in aenggu, "mountain", which as a totem gave birth to the Holu tongesu. Aenggu consists of the segments aeng, a derivative of aengei which connotes female gender, and gu. These cultural associations are, of course, consistent with the kinship status of a "daughter" who like her "mother" is a "giver of life".[52]

As a "male daughter", then gutekolei must represent a totemic life-giver or a rebirth category. The sister's son's/daughter's husband's totemic status is confirmed by the term aentmin and by the qualifiying term kolei. Furthermore, as an indicator of "maleness", kolei would also seem to imply a particular totemic gloss on "agnatic continuity", but one that is characterized by structural ambiguity. These themes are expressed by variants of a term that may be applied to aentmin as a collectivity.

The variant terms at issue include the following:

(i) diomditia
(ii) diomtiawaidi
(iii) snidiomditia
(iv) momesninai

Each term is a combination of smaller segments that may be repeated in other terms. The smaller segments in turn convey meanings which, taken as a whole for any given term, express the structural position of the ZS/DH within a pattern of kinship, descent and cosmic categories that underly the relationship between aepua/mome and aentmin/gutekolei. The linguistic segments and their meanings are listed below:

dio — a species of water python; symbol of renewal and rebirth; totemic ancestor of variably single tongesu or

all Aekyom.

wai – water, river; medium of birth, renewal and rebirth.

di – the umbilical cord; symbol of maternal or matrilateral connection.

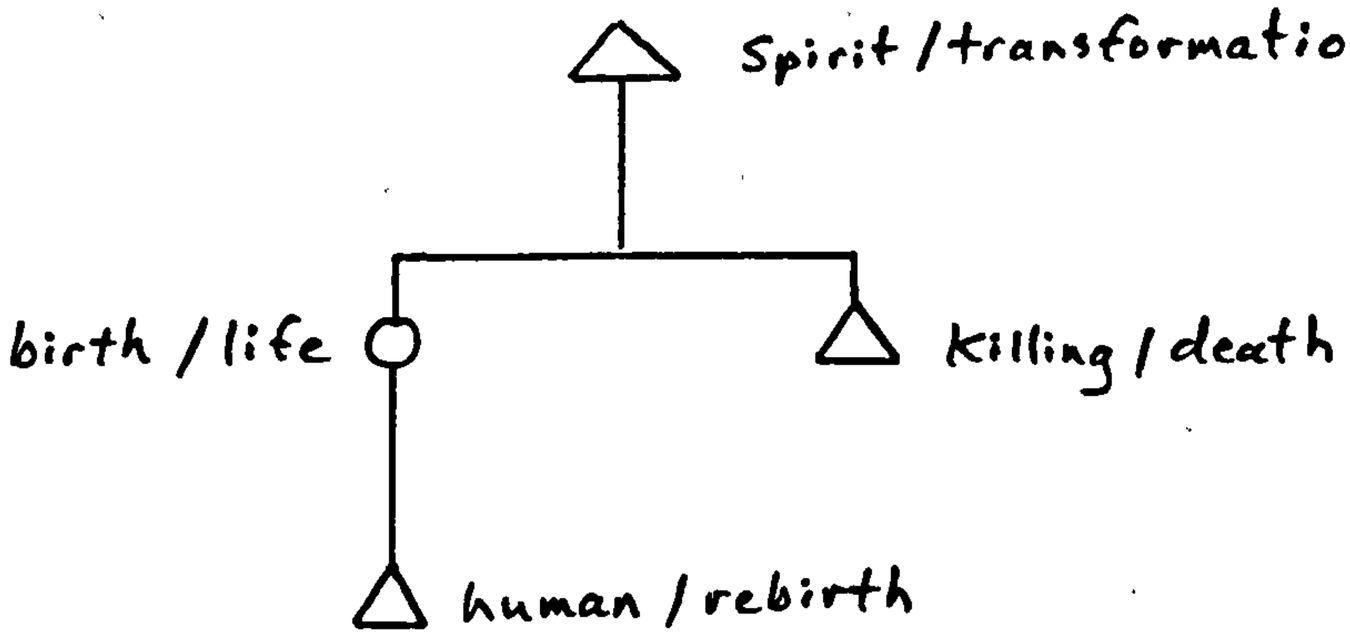
mome – MB/WF; totemic category.

sni – the cosmic realm of sky beings; indicator of male gender

tia – agnates of the first descending terminological level; indicator of agnatic relationship.

Despite the significance the genealogical tie between father (ai) and son (tia) has for the theme of agnation and its practical application at the level of hamlet social organization, the concept of "agnatic continuity" as a category of descent is clearly embedded in a much wider system of categories defined by kinship, gender, totemic and cosmic criteria. As the data and its analysis indicate, the relationship between aepua and aentmin is central to this conceptual scheme. But its symbolic import vis-à-vis relationship by descent is "indirect" rather than "direct". The familiar designation "male mother" (e.g., Radcliffe-Brown, 1952) and its apparent correlated "male daughter", while perhaps analytically seductive, are not true to Aekyom conceptions. Consciously such notions are foreign to Aekyom understanding. Moreover, they are inconsistent with the way in which "birth" and "rebirth" are expressed in the relationship terminology: the former being defined at adjacent terminological levels and the latter being defined at alternate terminological levels. Rather, the "indirect" relationship of descent between aepua and aentmin is given in the symbolic process whereby matrilateral (MB/ZS) and affinal (WF/DH) relations are transformed into agnatic relations (characteristic of the tie between father and son, or brothers). Put another way, the relationship between aepua and aentmin is a dialectical relationship category which at a more general level of analysis is at the foundation of Aekyom cultural definitions of descent. When articulated at the level of the relationship terminology, the dialectic is expressed by the following structural equation which draws together aspects of kinship, gender, totemic and cosmic relations within a wider relational whole:

B : Z :: male : female :: spirit : human :: killing : birth :: death : life
This equation may be re-presented in the diagram below which highlights its structural oppositions. However, the diagram should be interpreted from a dialectical point of view; e.g., where life is transformed into death which in turn is tranformed back into life.



As a descent configuration, this diagram clearly contradicts a notion of "pure" agnatic relation or patrilineal descent which is an ostensible feature of Aekyom hamlet organization and an apparent cultural feature among some other Ok Tedi Area societies (e.g., Ningerum, Star Mountains). If the contradiction is real, it should constitute a cultural problematic and, therefore, an issue for mythological discourse (see Chapters 1 and 6).

(ix) aepua, gute

Socially, culturally and linguistically, the relationship between aepua and gute parallels that between aepua and aentmin, with the exception of certain constraints on residence, ritual and economic relations that may be traced to differences in sex and ritual statuses between aepua and gute. Like a man's sister, his gute is culturally categorized as a "giver of life".

(x) owei, aepite

The structural ambiguity charcteristic of the relationship between aepua and aentmin is also a feature of the relationship between a man and

his MBW/WM. Generally, this relationship implies both restraint and familiarity due to differences in sex and (usually) age as well as other cultural considerations. While aepite must avoid using his owei's personal name in contexts of reference and address, there is no institution of mother-in-law avoidance frequently found elsewhere in the world. Their relations are, more often than not, extremely cordial and, particularly under conditions of shared hamlet residence, may be well integrated with life at the family level. However, the bearing that the relationship between aepite and owei has on the family is not limited to matters of practical sociology: it also has significant symbolic and religious connotations. Bearing in mind that the family (gile) is an economically productive and socially reproductive unit in Aekyom society, it is striking that the relationship terms under consideration should reflect these themes, linguistically and symbolically.

To my knowledge, owei cannot be broken down into smaller, meaningful linguistic segments. It may, however, form the root of other words such as kowei, a vine fruit, which is symbolically relevant to the mythological representation of the relationship category owei. This connection may, analytically and symbolically, be traced through a consideration of an important denotatum of owei. Owei also refers to the handle of the stone axe or kiun, a male-owned tool used by cooperating families (that often include the MBW/WM) for the domestic production of sago. As noted earlier, the relationships between economic organization or activities (cooperating families), nutrients (sago) body parts (hands) and tools (stone axe) form an integrated system of categories. It is striking, therefore, that the hands, symbolic models of the procreative family, which hold the axe by the handle (owei), are presented in myth as loci of regeneration. More importantly, it is the hands of the elder sister (aepei) who is killed by her younger brother (gmore) Wi, that are transformed into the pig and cassowary. Significantly, the narrator of this story added,

> When Wi made the pig and cassowary he said to them, "Now, cassowary, you call pig owei, and you, pig, shall call cassowary aepite."

The closeness of the cassowary and pig in the context of rebirth is confirmed by a variant of this story in which the first man Wi is out hunting and collects the krowei and gri fruits. He places the fruits in a string bag when he arrives at his house. The pig and the cassowary then hatch from the fruits ("birth") and then emerge from the string bag ("rebirth") together. Without providing additional mythic details, it seems obvious that these stories:

(i) provide confirmation of the structural equation suggested above;

(ii) identify the affinal relation as integral to the system of totemic descent categories;[53] and

(iii) draw attention to the religious and spiritual significance that Aekyom culture assigns to the affinal relation, a distinction that is also applicable to the relation between cross sex siblings.

The spiritual character of the relationship between owei and aepite is reinforced on symbolic and linguistic grounds. Symbolically, owei is attached to immortality and rebirth by its association with kiun, a linguistic component of kiunkia. And of course, aepite is identified with the cassowary, an eminently spiritual creature. Linguistically, the term aepite expresses the themes of birth and transition. It consists of the prefix ae, a transitional category, and pite an adjective used to describe ripe fruit (cf. Gell, 1975) which in Aekyom collective representations are identified with male birth. The totemic-spiritual connection is also expressed in the substitute relationship term for aepite:

biguam = bi ("totemic baby") + guam (spirit category).

In this context, aepite/biguam is the totemic child of owei and aepua, or a category of descent calculated from the structurally parallel relations H/W and B/Z.

(xi) owei, gute

There is little to add regarding this relationship since it is structurally parallel to the relationship between owei and aepite. The sociological background to the relationship is sufficient to complete the

description. Should gute co-reside with owei the latter will assume many social responsibilities vis-à-vis gute, especially when the latter reaches the age of marriage. These social responsibilities tend to be similar to those asumed by the mother during the years prior to her daughter's marriage. In this sense, the roles of owei and aemae form a complementary pair during the socialization of gute.

(xii) aepei, gmore

Apei and gmore are unique to the Aekyom relationship terminology as they constitute the only pair of relationship terms that is continuous across the generations, spanning the medial and successsive ascending terminological levels. As such, the terms are distinguished on the basis of sex and age differences, aepei usually being the elder category. Therefore, aepei reaches into the mythological "past", the time of the first ancestors, a distinction that is also shared by ahwi/ali and kiguam/monai. More importantly, aepei provides a crucial focus on the nature of "agnatic continuity" since it is a relationship category embedded within a web of agnatic ties. This point has important implications for ordering relationships at different levels of social organization. At the most general level, "cross sex sibling" terms are used by adjacent or cooperating hamlets within a security circle or among "bush associates". Creating and sustaining social solidarities,therefore, appears to be an inherent feature of the relationship between aepei and gmore. This distinction holds with even greater force at the level of the family and hamlet.

Although a boy will depend mainly on his mother to fulfill his various needs, especially as a resident of the hamlet rine, many of the mother's tasks may be assumed by the aepei (elder sister). An elder sister will, for example, often be seen carrying her infant brother from place to place, or hand in hand when the latter reaches the toddler stage. Aepei will attend to gmore's needs, look after him or play games with him. If she is old enough, the elder sister will also assist the mother by preparing his food, collecting water for him to drink or bathing him in

nearby creeks and rivers. From an early age, then, the relationship between aepei and gmore is unquestionably close, with an affective quality that usually extends well beyond childhood and into adulthood.

The extent of aepei-gmore interdependency in later years often depends on their marital and residential statuses. When marriage and/or residence separate them, the frequency of their contact may be slight. Nevertheless, despite the geographical distance between them, gmore remains interested in aepei's welfare and will come to her aid should difficulties arise in her affinal hamlet. Similarly, aepei will express concern for gmore's well-being, a theme that often occurs in ceremonial songs (see Depew, 1982).

The death of a spouse or divorce may result in the reunion of aepei and gmore in the same hamlet. Under these circumstances they usually reinstate their social, economic and ritual interdependency. Of particular importance is their exchange relationship: like husband and wife, brother and sister will exchange meat for sago. As noted earlier, this relationship is expressed symbolically in a myth about the origin of meat where aepei's body is transformed into meat by gmore. Bearing in mind the symbolic role of meat as a metaphor of "maleness" the myth also expresses the close agnatic bond between them. This point is confirmed by a substitute relationship term for gmore: FZ will often address or refer to her BS as tia. It is tempting to regard this practice as an expression of the FZ as a "female father" (cf. Radcliffe-brown, 1952). However, the equation is more apparent than real as further investigation of the ritual status of aepei indicates.

In the event of illness, gmore may turn to his aepei for medical attention, which is invariably performed in a ritual context or with some degree of magical/spiritual assistance at the level of spells and technique. However, it is especially the events surrounding gmore's death that clearly articulate the religious status of aepei. Significantly, the deceased's aepei and aepua perform complementary roles in the mortuary rites. But whereas aepua's role is more closely indentified with death and

the corpse, a point reflected in the linguistic status of "aepua", aepei's role is firmly grounded in images of rebirth and direct involvement in the transformation of life-forms.[54] Traditionally, aepei peels the outer layer of skin (katei) from the corpse and paints the latter with ochre. Both the colour "red" (kapikina, "blood paint") and the term for ochre

(sangene: sa + gene; gene = "stomach", "excrement")

converge in the image of rebirth by shedding the skin.

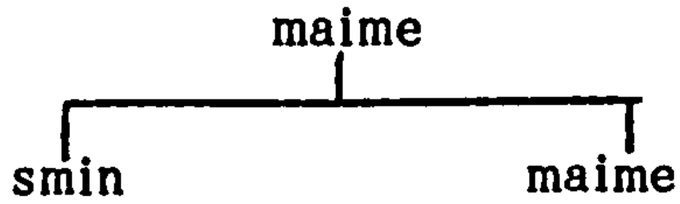
Aepei's tenacious hold on the circulation of life forms is even expressed on the event of her own death. According to my informants, a hunter must refrain from killing cassowary following the death of his aepei since her spirit will reside in the creature's body.[55]

The qualities of transition, continuity of life forms and spirituality associated with the kinship status aepei in these ritual contexts are repeated in language. The term aepei consists of the segments ae and pei. As described above, the prefix ae implies a connection with transitional forms, states and/or processes. Similarly, pei is the root of peinam, which refers to a creek or river mouth, a geographical feature that the Aekyom anthropomorphize in the context of birth.[56] Finally as a substitute relationship term for aepei, the term aeguam clearly conveys the meaning of spiritual essence.

Gmore, on the other hand, is somewhat more difficult to interpret from a linguistic point of view. It may contain the root mo, an abbreviation of monai ("cassowary") but this cannot be asserted with a great degree of confidence. The only other denotatum of gmore that I am aware of is the claw or "finger" of the flying fox (maime). However, this association may not be as curious and perplexing as it may at first seem. To demonstrate the relevance of this, it will be necessary to consider, as a first step, aspects of Aekyom ornithology.

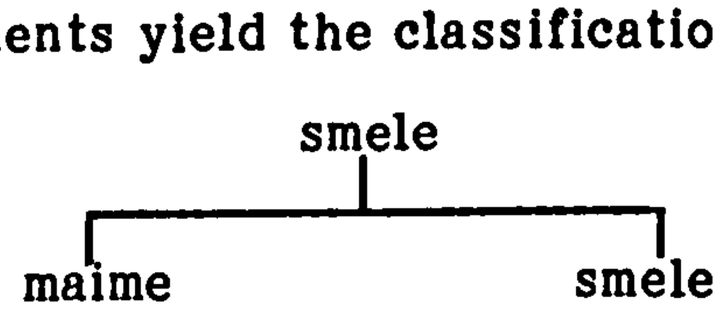
My informants were quite undecided as to whether the flying fox is to be classifed as a bird (smele) or not. While some maintained the flying fox is a bird, others argued that it belongs to a different tei (tei antei

antei).[57] With respect to belonging to their own tei, the logic of bat classification follows the pattern below:

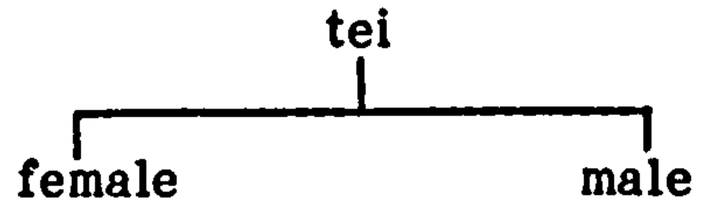


As my informants put it, "All smin (i.e., bats distinguished from the flying fox) are maime, but all maime are not smin". The same logic, however, also underlies the identification of the flying fox with birds. This is expressed, appropriately enough, in a myth about the flying fox and a bird called kmu, who in terms of colour do actually resemble one another.

Originally, flying fox and bird were identical, one could not tell them apart. But when flying fox, unlike bird, proved incapable of standing upright on a tree branch during a ritual dance performance, he inherited the wings which flying foxes now possess and was destined to hang upside down on a tree branch. Therefore, the myth in combination with informants' statements yield the classification,



whose structure is identical to that for "bats".[58] But the myth also expresses gender distinctions on a vertical axis: bird is up above, a male dimension, while flying fox is down below, a female dimension. Substituting gender distinctions for "species" distinctions, and replacing a particular tei (smelei) with the more general category tei we get the following classification:



Mythologically, this classification also describes the constitution of the human group as a named descent group; while in contemporary times it describes the classification of human beings. Now, we know that the family (gile) is relevant to the reproduction of members of named descent groups. We also know that the hand is a model of the family. It must be in this wider context then that a reasonable interpretation of gmore from a linguistic-symbolic viewpoint may be made, especially in relation to aepei.

Linguistic identification of gmore with the "finger" of the flying fox symbolically places gmore within a female ambience circumscribed by the symbolism of the hand. Now, consider the issue of age difference between aepei and gmore in this light. Relative to aepei, gmore is "second born", "next to the mother" while aepei, relative to gmore, is "first born", "next to the father". Being "next to the father" implies a cultural transformation represented by various forms of cooking (e.g., roasting, smoking). Being "next to the mother" suggests a natural transformation, something that is given in nature, not culture. Among the Aekyom, cooking is a means of preserving meat, or preventing decay and rot. Smoking is an especially effective means of preserving meat. Bearing in mind the place of meat as a metaphor of agnation, it follows that aepei, as "first born" and "next to the father" represents the immortal and spiritual aspect of agnatic continuity while gmore is that aspect of agnatic continuity that is subject to mortality, death and rot.[59] Significantly, this interpretation is consistent with the projection of aepei into the past by the relationship terminology.

The implication of the relationship between aepei and gmore for the nature of Aekyom descent categories is clear: aepei is directly involved in the cycle of rebirth by virtue of her spiritual presence, a cultural distinction that complements gmore's participation in the birth of his children, a natural process (see Chapter 5).

(xiii) aepei, auke

The solidarities described for the relationship between aepei and gmore at the level of social organization are paralleled if not exceeded by those that inform the relationship between aepei and auke. The relationship between sisters is, perhaps, the closest and most enduring of all relationships defined by Aekyom society. Because of their sex status, sisters share residential space in the hamlet as well as economic tasks. As young girls, sisters will cooperate and/or assist their mother in the production of sago, in the collection of various foods, and, at times, in cooking food for the family. These cooperative relations often endure after marriage. Aekyom practice of sororal polygyny and asymetrical marriage (see below) frequently place sisters within the same household where they will maintain their social and economic ties and further develop ritual ones.

One of the most important ritual relationships between aepei and auke is identified with childbirth. Their mutual aid in the delivery process inextricably binds them to the spiritual atmosphere of the deep jungle and the birth hut. Not surprisingly, I was unable to observe these proceedings first hand, while the range of second hand information was necessarily limited by a general reluctance among female informants to discuss the rituals of childbirth that are strictly "women's business." Nevertheless, Aekyom mythology provides a significant forum in which to discuss the procreative symbolism of the relationship between aepei and auke.

For example, in a tale about the origin of pria:ngei river, a tributary of the duo river (Fly River), aepei and auke are trying to dig out a bandicoot from its burrow when suddenly they strike a large stone. As they lift the stone from the hole, water gushes forth, separating the two women and forming the pria:ngei river, which flows along until it meets the duo river. While on either side of the pria:ngei river, the two sisters try to change themselves into the insects renai and banai, fail to do so, and become the nimum insect instead.

This story is particularly interesting both in terms of its setting — it is about an original source of creation — and the themes of union and separation that are intricately woven together within a cosmic context.

The first theme concerns the union of the two women which occurs at the beginning and at the end of the story. In the beginning, the two women are in similar states: they have both removed their grass skirts in order to dig out the bandicoot. This suggests a common link with procreation as Aekyom women remove their skirts in the presence of one another only during labour and childbirth. This theme is confirmed by the symbolic status of the bandicoot and its position in the burrow or hole which suggests the idea of a child in the birth canal. More importantly, as a tei animal, the bandicoot is pre-eminiently a female animal and a member of a "class" of animals whose generic name, tei, is synonymous with the generic name of an original named descent group. The type of

birth under consideration, therefore, is that of tei birth, or a totemic birth within the named descent group. Now, what is the point of the stone? In the myth, it performs two functions. First, it substitutes for the bandicoot, since it is the stone, not the bandicoot, which the two women dig out from the burrow. The stone must, therefore, be integral to the symbolism of tei births. And second, it indirectly separates the two women, for it is the removal of the stone from the hole that leads to the birth of the river and the subsequent retreat of the "sisters" to either side of the river. At this point the myth introduces a seemingly arbitrary event: the women try to become two different insects, renai and banai. However, there is an implicit distinction being drawn here between the two women in terms of the nature and location of the attempted transformations. Renai and banai are two cicada – like insects that "sing" when night begins to fall. Since this is a time of transition, it also draws attention to a feature of structural ambiguity and opposition. The "sisters" are indeed on opposite sides of the river, a mythological theme that generally indicates the opposition human-spirit (see Chpater 6). According to the structural equation hypothesized earlier, this oppostion should parallel a male-female opposition expressed either explicitly or implicitly by the myth. Unfortuntately I failed to ask if renai and banai may be distinguished on the basis of gender. But Aekyom mythology provides confirmation of the gender distinctions between aepei and auke who attempt to become these insects.

In a closely related story about the origin of string for string bags there is an explicit reference to the gender differences between aepei and auke relative to the string bags ("wombs") they make, which, appropriately enough, are closely tied to differences in their procreative powers. Here aepei is given the name Osala ("cassowary-woman") while auke is called kriamsala ("[illegible] tree hole woman"). These nominal distinctions are relevant to the present discussion and merit a brief digression on the topic of reproduction among cassowaries and kri trees.

In Aekyom thought, cassowary and kri tree life cycles are closely related. I was told that when the kri tree bears its buds (dei lulu) and

flowers (kiapi) the cassowary will then lay its eggs which come from similar "buds" inside the cassowary's womb (kei aewe). Bearing in mind that flowers and flowering are signs of fertility as well as death,[60] and that the emergence of a cassowary chick (hwi dulei) from a hard, bone-like or "stone-like" egg shell is tantamount to a rebirth, we may return to a consideration of Osala (aepei) and Kriamsala (auke) by noting several other features that distinguish them.

Aekyom mythology and informants' comments consistently identify Osala as the mother of five named boys.[61] Kriamsala, however, is childless. Why this dinstinction in procreation should hold is not readily or directly expressed by the Aekyom. But a clue to its meaning is suggested by the story about string bags. On the one hand, Osala makes her string bags from the bark of the gon tree while Kriamsala makes her string bags from the bark of the de igun tree. Linguistically and symbolically, the Aekyom compare tree bark to animal or human skin. The shared term katei may, significantly enough, be broken down into the linguistic segments ka and tei. Ka is used as a plural possessive to mean "their" while tei denotes an original named descent group. Thus katei means literally, "their named descent group", and points towards the nature of a named descent group. Trees, the Aekyom reminded me, shed their skins like snakes, a process of renewal and rebirth that is based on the dialectical opposition life-death. This opposition, together with the types of tree bark used by the two women to make string bags, have important implications for the place of gender distinctions and the relationship categories aepei, auke in cultural definitions of Aekyom descent groups. The myth states very clearly that

> Osala's string bags are on the "men's side" while Kriamsala's string bags are on the "women's side".

Prima facie, this suggests a distinction between partilateral and matrilateral relatives, respectively. But why would female agnates be distinguished in this way? Since neither the Aekyom nor myself had any immediate answers, it seemed that the reasoning involved was rather more complex, but at the same time readily at hand in terms of the information

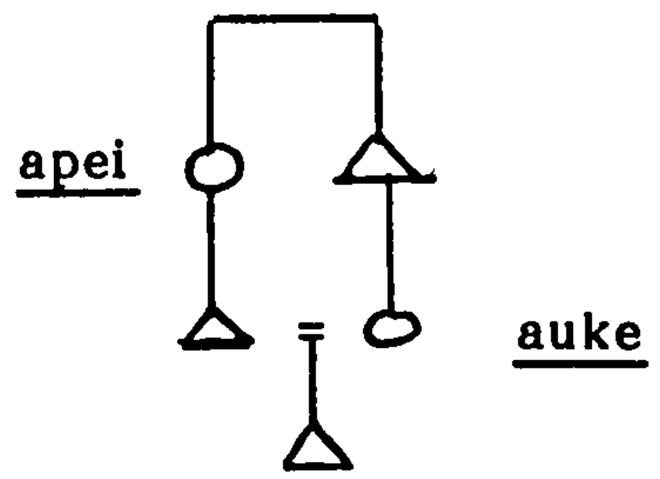
supplied by the myth and its connection with the relationship terminology and the symbolism of trees.

There is a clear sense in which the gon tree is on the "men's side" and the deigun tree is on the "women's side" given the wider context of the original creation and transformation of tei as named descent groups. The gon tree lends its name to the Gondoke tongesu whose members trace their origin to the emergence of males from the fruit of the gon tree (see Chapters 5 and 6). Significantly, Gondoke may be broken down into the meaningful linguistic units gon "totemic tree", and doke "bark string". There is, therefore, a significant connection between Osala, or "cassowary-woman", a pre-eminently spiritual creature, and her male offspring vis-à-vis agnatic continuity and totemic descent group membership. The deigun tree, on the other hand, whose bark is used by the "childless" Kriamsala to make string bags is closely tied, linguistically and symbolically, to menstruation and its relationship to fertility, death and the male-female opposition.

The phrase deigun deira, "deigun tree seen", is used by the Aekyom to describe the menstrual cycle. While a woman's fertility is identified with her blood (see Chapter 5), the shedding of her blood is likened to a death. This is confirmed not only by the linguistic and symbolic parallels between the status of women's blood (kapi) and the status of kri tree flowers (kiapi), which, significantly enough, bloom on the tree's trunk rather than its branches, but also by the symbolism of an alternative phrase for menstruation, namely dwarin deira, "moon seen". As noted previously, the Aekyom compare the waxing and waning of the moon with the the menstrual cycle. But the dialectic of birth and killing, life and death, reflected in the status of women's blood (not shed) and the lunar cycle are symbolically tied to Aekyom conceptions of the nature of tei, agnation and agnatic continuity since moon sustains his own existence or identity on the cooked meat that he obtains from the tei animals whose blood he has shed.

Bearing in mind, then, that all Aekyom are reborn from or

transformations of the original tei or their representatives, it would appear that the relationship between aepei (Osala) and auke (Kriamsala) paradoxically provides the measure of agnatic continuity that is expressed in terms of totemically named descent groups (e.g., tei, teinam, tongesu). However, the proposition holds only if a general and particular condition is met: that aepei and auke contract marriages, a detail that is not overlooked in Aekyom mythology. Invariably, Osala and Kriamsala are married to Wi, the "first man". While this suggests sororal polygyny, Aekyom social logic dictates that Wi be a representation of "the issue of agnatic and totemic identity" rather than simply a husband married to two wives who are "sisters". This mythic constraint in turn directs attention to the particular feature of the marriages involved and its relationship to the relationship terminology. If myth and social classfication are to achieve a reasonable level of integration, and totemic descent groups are to preserve a measure of coherence, then auke must marry asymmetrically or the son of aepei. But that is not all. While aepei and auke are agnates within the same or adjacent terminological level, they relate to the issue of agnatic continuity spanning alternate terminological levels in ways that are dialectically opposed and can only be described as totemic. The relationship between aepei and auke in this context is expressed in the following diagram



while the contextual oppositions may be listed below:

aepei	auke
Osala	Kriamsala
dei gon	dei gun
male	female
birth	killing
life	death
immortality	mortality
spirit	human
descent	agnation

We are now in a position to pick up some of the pieces of the relationship terminology and place them in a pattern consistent with these arguments. First, what appears as a terminological anomaly where BDC (female ego) are classifed as kiunkia turns out to be a logical consequence of a totemically informed relationship terminology. However, the relationship category kiunkia has many symbolic implications for kinship and descent categories.

Consider for a moment the place of stone in the myth about the birth of priangei river. As "stone child" or representative of tei (totemic) rebirth, it is "born from" the relationship between aepei and auke as outlined in the diagram above. Yet the stone, and the water with which it is closely associated,[62] momentarily disrupts the cooperative aspect of the relationship between aepei and auke, sending them to opposite banks of the river where their identities are the subject of further (potential) separation and differentiation. I suggest that stone and water here reflects the solidarity of the agnatic tie between father and son. This is suggested, linguistically and symbolically, by the nature of the river involved. In general, rivers and creeks are called wai, a term that also denotes water. Wai consists of the root ai, which I have argued is the key focus for concepts of agnation. Significantly, priangei contains the root angei, a relationship term that refers to the eldest brother and as a root of kiangei dulei is "next to the father" in terms of agnatic identity and the symbolism of the hand. The mythic symbolism I suggest refers to the agnatic tie which attempts to pre-empt the aepei-auke relationship. But the latter is simply reasserted by kiunkia who, it will be recalled, often inherits his stone axe from aepei's brother (ego's MF, or monai/kiguam). It follows then that the tie between father and son is "born from" or only exists because of prior cross sex realtionships between siblings and cou sins and the asymmetric marriage relationship, all of which fill out the relationship between aepei and auke in the mythic presentation of agnatic relation. That the structural integrity of the relationship between aepei and auke should prevail is reflected at the end of the myth where the two women turn into the ninum insect. This is clearly a totemic testimony to the constancy of the aepei-auke relationship as ninum sings only during the day.

To complete the discussion on a totemic note, I shall mention in passing that auke also denotes a plant used by women while processing sago. The connection with fertility and mortality here seems obvious. Also obvious is the reason why Kriamsala is "childless".

(xiv) angei, gmore

Since many details of the relationship categories angei and gmore have already been discussed, some general comments on the relationship between brothers will be sufficent here.

In general, the relationship between "brothers", especially if genealogical ties are recognized to be close, is characterized by a considerable degree of solidarity. This seems partly a function of their sex status and frequently common residence in a hamlet, and partly a function of common agnatic identities expressed by common group membership, especially at the hamlet level, the inheritance of group names and the inheritance of the father's personal first name as a personal second name. Furthermore, the terminology of same sex siblings may also be extended to "bush associates", a practice that tends to create and sustain solidarities, although they are usually "at a distance" and confined to legal and economic matters.

To a certain extent fraternal solidarities within the hamlet also encompass political and legal matters, although issues concerning property ownership and use often link brothers indirectly, the primary focus being the father. Question concerning control over property may in fact be a divisive force among brothers. I recorded a number of cases where in the past conflicts over property led to fratricide, a situation that is deplored but at the same time tolerated by the hamlet membership. In other situations, for those who fail to succeed to titular ownership or practical control of the hamlet and its resources, residence with cross cousins or affines might be a viable option on a long term basis. It is especially interesting today that in the absence of a single senior "owner" of Graihei hamlet territory, no Drim brothers live together in the same house,

although their separate houses are built near to one another in the same general area in Drimgas village (see Map 4). Furthermore, when one Drim brother and his family abandoned their house in the midst of a cockroach population explosion, they chose to live with the wife's aepua rather than with other "Drim families" whose houses were large enough to accommodate them. While residence patterns and casual observations suggest a measure of social distance among brothers, competition for wives is traditionally conducive to internal tensions and conflict. According to my informants, this could reach quite serious levels between individuals, especially prior to sustained European contact and might threaten the stability of the hamlet as a whole in the absence of intervening mechanisms for conflict resolution, such as migration.

Age differences too appear to play an important role in the separation of brothers both emotionally and pragmatically. Many male informants stated they felt closer to an older brother (angei) than to a younger brother (gmore) but at the same time recognized limitations on relationships with either, particularly at the level of economic cooperation such as the production of staple foods, including sago and bananas and the hunting of large game. Significantly, differences in names either at a group or personal level were also perceived by brothers to be a constraint on more comprehensive forms of fraternal solidarity. At this juncture, it is interesting to note that in myth brothers are usually represented by a group which in relation to an aepua (MB) eventually develops internal conflicts and divisions that frequently lead to fratricide or other deaths (see Depew, 1982).

(xv) angei, auke

Again, many of the details of these relationship categories have been covered and it is not necessary to repeat them here. What may be emphasized, however, is the particular bearing that the relationship between angei and auke has on cultural definitions of marriage.

In general, the cross sex sibling relationship serves as a model for

marriage and social reproduction at the levels of social organization and myth. However, it is the relationship between angei and auke that is of particular concern in these contexts. It should be stated at the outset that marriages between angei and auke who are genealogically close (i.e., have the same father) and share tongesu names and hamlet membership are said by the Aekyom not to occur: they are considered incestuous (iyaelyo) or "stupid" (nononkina), not like human beings but like dogs and pigs. Significantly, I uncovered no cases of such brother-sister unions. The significance of the cross sex sibling relationship here as a model for marriage refers to the nature of their exchange relationships as well as the age differences between angei and auke which, together, parallel features that serve to define the relations between husband and wife. For example, angei is above all a supplier of meat while auke is a supplier of sago, as well as cooked foods in general. Moreover, like a husband in relation to his wife, angei is older than auke. However, at the level of myth, the first marriages are those between brother and sister, usually angei and auke, who then proceed to reproduce the relevant tongesu or Aekyom population. These marriages and subsequent populating of the social world follow totemic transformations. As implied earlier, the agnatic relation between angei and auke, in the context of social reproduction, dovetails with the relations between cross cousins in the constitution of the lineal character of the relationship terminology.

(xvi) mote

Ethnographically, the reciprocal relationship term mote is central to my concern with the meaning and function of the relationship terminology as a mode of classification. As a symmetrical property of the relationship terminology, the distribution of this term introduces formal structural ambiguity into an otherwise asymmetrically ordered system. Therefore, the term mote raises certain problems of interpretation as well as methodological issues that are relevant to the status of the relationship terminology as a "total social fact" (Mauss, 1967).

Needham (1962) in particular has been attentive to the theoretical

and methodological implications of analyzing relationship terminologies within a wider cultural context. However, his concern with structural ambiguity in relationship terminologies has led to a methodological preference that interprets "cultural context" in the broadest terms possible: i.e., he has embarked on the formal comparative analysis of world societies. On the basis of this evidence, Needham has defined the problem as a question of formal ordering principles that are, theoretically speaking, ultimately grounded in the fundamental operations of the human mind (e.g., Neeham, 1967, 1968). And he has concluded that structural ambiguity in a relationship terminology is indicative of evolutionary structural change or systems in transition (e.g., Needham, 1968, 1974).

While perhaps persuasive at a general comparative level, Needham's conclusions may be somewhat hypermetropic. This impairment of cultural vision might be resolved by simply turning his conclusions around. That is to say, the system may be consistuted by ambiguity and transitions that are part of a culturally specific problematic. Put another way, as features of a specific cultural configuration, the properties of ambiguity and transition are to be understood not in terms of evolutionary hypotheses but on the basis of social behaviour, institutions, language and symbolic systems within a culture or cultural region (cf. Needham, 1969). The Aekyom case, at least, seems amenable to this approach.

One of the most distinctive features of the relationship between mote is the high level of economic cooperation, especially with respect to the production of sago. Cross cousins or siblings-in-law are more often seen together working a sago garden than are other kinship-based labour units. Moreover, they are the preferred categories of domestic partnerships in this realm. In this context, both preference and practice are enhanced by common residence or joint ownership of a hamlet and its territory. When mote live in separate hamlets, usufruct rights in one another's hamlet lands and resources are usually automatic, although they may be subject to revocation in the event of major political differences (e.g., inter-hamlet warfare) or hostilities resulting from the maltreatment of a spouse. Thus, while relations between mote are close and

cooperative, they may also reflect tensions and conflicts that often have their focus in the marriage relationship.

This theme of social ambiguity is readily expressed by institutionalized joking relationships (klaeklaemen) between male mote. The joking is almost invariably sexual in nature, with the condition of the penis being the object of insult and ruse. For example, male mote often attempt to touch or grab one another's penis or, if this should fail, describe the penis as being too long or too big like a log. In contrast, reference to sexual themes between cross sex mote are rare. Traditionally there is a tendency for bachelor mote to avoid single, female mote in particular, although this behaviour is also a function of general differences in sex and ritual statuses.

With the possible exception of their general participation in Aekyom marriage ceremonials, the most significant ritual role performed by mote is identified with the mortuary rites. Here the deceased's male mote along with the aepua, angei and gmore, dig the grave. While it is usually the deceased's sisters (aepei) who paint the corpse with ochre, the peeling of the skin is performed for a female corpse by the sister-in-law, and for a male corpse, by the sister (aepei). What I wish to empahsize here is that, unlike the aepua who is linguistically and symbolically closely associated with the corpses and death, the mote is more closely tied to notions of transition in the context of spirituality and totemic rebirth. These themes are reflected in language, symbolism and myth.

Linguistically, mote may be broken down into the elements mo and te. As I have already noted, mo is an abbreviation of monai, "cassowary", a creature that in Aekyom thought and belief is a pre-eminently spiritual image central to the symbolism of totemic rebirth. Consistently, the temporal ambiguity implied by the image of the monai as a symbol of rebirth is expressed by te, an adverb of time meaning "yesterday" and "tomorrow", or more generally the "past" ("death, ancestors") and the "future" ("rebirth, descendants"). It is particularly striking then that mote appears as a linguistic element of the compound word motenai, which

denotes a variety of sweet potato called "mote's sweet potato". This connection is highly relevant as sweet potatoes or swai figure as ancestral totems. The Gasei tongesu of Dnitonai hamlet, for example, trace their ancestral origins to the swai su or "old people's sweet potato". The general link between sweet potatoes and agnatic continuity is also expressed linguistically: the generic term swai contains the element ai which is an important focus for agnatic concepts. Why should mote be identified in this way? What in fact is the nature of their connection with agnatic continuity?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary, as a first step, to re-examine the context of economic cooperation and interdependence between mote and its relationship to institutionalized joking behaviour. Mote are, above all else, central to the production of sago, the Aekyom staple food. But sago is also the source of male fertility since cooked sago, when eaten, is tranformed into semen. The parallel between food (eating) and sexuality is confirmed by two observations: (i) like sago pith which is extracted from a log, semen is ejected from a penis. Significantly, the Aekyom explicitly compare the penis to a log. However, institutionalized joking behaviour between males focuses on a natural source of creation (raw sago, semen) which in its cooked or cultural state is regarded as a supernatural power. It is striking that sago pith which has been culturally processed by mote is, in its transformed state as edible sago powder, called hu, a term that also refers to beneficient magic or magic that is used to restore the body's integrity. Furthermore, sago powder is also used as a medicinal substance to heal cuts and wounds. (ii) A phrase for sexual intercourse is sile dra, "to eat penis". According to my informants, sexual intercourse (the ejection of semen) should take place in the bush, or dei dulei, a spiritual realm. Moreover, traditionally the groom should have been previously "cooked" during male initiation rites before engaging in sexual intercourse with the bride for the purpose of social reproduction. As noted below, the treatment of sago during the rites of marriage occupies an important place in the religious definition of (sexual) relations between bride and groom, wife and husband.

The role of sago and semen as sources of supernatural power does not overlook the symbolism of sago grubs. The grubs of course feed on sago pith. But they are also symbols of agnatic continuity. It is not unreasonable then to suggest that the grubs are replete with "raw semen", like bachelors or bridegrooms who are fed cooked sago that generates raw semen. Now, to reproduce, sago grubs (as penis?) shed their skins and are, in a way culturally recognized by the Aekyom, reborn. That this rebirth is spiritual in context is suggested by the colour of the grubs concerned: they are white, like the skin of the spirits of the dead. What connection does all this have with the relationship category mote?

It will be recalled that sene is the root of psene, which means "tree grub". At least linguistically then, sene must be closely tied to concepts of agnation. At a general level, this is expressed by the compound word keisene (kei + sene) which the Aekyom use to refer to their distant trading partners, especially the Mountain Ok or Min peoples, who are regarded as "brothers and sisters" both individually and at the level of group names. Note, then, the way in which the Aekyom linguistically qualify those mote who are also "marriageable": they are called sene or sen mote. Bearing in mind the features of distance and closeness inherent in the term keisene, as well as the social ambiguity that characterizes general relationships between mote and institutionalized joking, in what sense are sene "brother and sister"? An answer should reflect a concern with the issue of agnatic continuity in time and space which is, at the same time, underpinned by principles expressing ambiguous relationships.

The first clue may be traced to the symbolism of sago grubs. It will be noted that the "mother of the sago grubs" implies, paradoxically, a matrilateral connection, which is confirmed by the linguistic identification of the "marriageable" mote as a man's sene. Thus the relationship between MBD and and FZS, or from a wider pespective, a combination of the relationship between cross sex siblings, cross cousins and affines, has an important bearing on agnatic continuity or the perpetuation/reproduction of the relation between father (ai) and son(tia).

The second clue is to be found at the level of Aekyom mythology. Here two principles central to the meaning of the mote relationship category are elaborated and repeated throughout a wide variety and number of myths. The first principle concerns what I shall call the "asymmetrical completion of identity". This principle is expressed in the previously-mentioned tale about Hunguam ("Night-man") and Akunguam ("Day-man") who are also one another's mote. Here Akunguam as a representation of constancy and temporal incompleteness seeks out his "cross cousin" Hunguam who, as the incarnation of renewal and temporal completeness (reflected in his association with the cycle of day and night) teaches Akunguam the "secret of time". The latter, following his experience of this "mystery" returns to his own hamlet where his family, upon experiencing it likewise, vomit the food they have eaten. Or less cryptically, where a rebirth has taken place.

The second principle concerns the differentiation of identity via reciprocal action (Bateson, 1958) which in its mythological forms has an important bearing on institutionalized joking and the expression of identity relationships between mote. In the story of how bird (kmu) tricked (klaeklaemen) his mote flying fox (maime), the two creatures share a common identity. But their joint participation in ritual dance leads to their physical and spatial differentiation.

These linguistic, symbolic and mythical themes and principles serve to outline the nature of the ambiguity embedded in the relationship category mote. A more complete exposition of their meaning is a task pursued in greater detail in chapter 5 and 6.

(xvii) masu

In general, masu behave according to the constraints of sex and age differences. However, it may be pointed out here that the relationship between masu seems far more familiar and somewhat less restrained than the relationship between, say, aepua and aentmin. Not surprisingly, masu often reside in the same hamlet, cooperate in economic activities and

assume ritual roles, especially during male initiation, that reflect mutual interests in the development and welfare of the novice. However, the terminological identification of masu does not so much imply the idea of social allies – although this is also a feature of the relationship – as it does the consolidation of collateral lines. This is suggested first of all by the classification of the sister of masu as aepei, and his daugher as gute. It is also implied by language and symbolism. Masu is a compound word consisting of the elements ma and su which are closely interrelated in their specific meanings. Ma denotes a variety of wild (kawa) sago palm which is, nevertheless frequently cultivated by the Aekyom in their sago gardens. Thus, despite its distance from cultigens, ma is brought into harmony with them. The social analogue is, of course, the consolidation of otherwise separate agnatic lines, closely linked to the sago palm in Aekyom representations and identified by the linguistic category su, meaning "trunk" or "people".

(xviii) amban

One of the failings of my fieldwork was to give only limited attention to the relationship category amban. Like some informants, I tended to regard it as a residual category while in the field. However, when viewed from the perspective of adjacent terminological levels, it has structural significance within a pattern of asymmetrical marriage. Under the condition of matrilateral cross cousin marriage, a man's amban may also be his son's owei, a relationship category closely tied to notions of transition. Significantly, the linguistic character of amban appears to reflect this theme. Again, amban is a compound word consisting of the elements am, a category of female space, and ban, which may be related to banai or the cicada that heralds the transition from day to night. As we shall see the relationship category amban (and the corresponding constellation of ideas) is especially relevant to the interpretation and meaning of Aekyom marriage rituals.

Aekyom Marriage: Cultural Practice and Religious Form

Introduction

In this section, I wish to examine the sociological and religious implications of the social classification for Aekyom marriage practices and ceremony. Beginning with a general overview of the cultural significance of marriage, the discussion proceeds to examine in detail some of its more anomalous features. Marriage patterns are first introduced from an historical perspective which draws on the observations of first contact and early patrol reports. In order to address the apparent discrepancies in the reports, statistical field data on Aekyom marriage are presented which provide a more solid foundation for an investigation of the relevant conceptual issues. This leads to a description and analysis of Aekyom marriage rituals which draws the chapter to a close.

General Overview

From a functionalist perspective, it may be argued that marriage (siemen) lies at the very foundations of Aekyom society. For example, marriage creates and sustains relations of interdependence, cooperation and mutual aid among groups and individuals and therefore serves as a point of articulation for a variety and number of social institutions. More importantly, marriage is central to the formation of individual and group identity and to their perpetuation or reproduction.

All adult men (one duwene or knu) are expected to marry. As male informants put it, "If a man has no wife, no one will make sago for him". Thus, for a man who does not marry the sources of staple food may become very restricted. Mothers and sisters may, of course, make sago for sons

and brothers at anytime. But for an adult man to be dependent on these female kin for sago is considered shameful.[63] More importantly, the status of ala simapu ("unmarried man") limits one's social and ritual participation, a situation that has serious implications for group continuity and identity. Women too are under social obligations and constraints to marry. Some women remarked that if a woman has no husband, "Who will give her meat?" However, there is no shame associated with a woman's dependency on a father or brother for meat if for some reasons she does not or cannot marry. But since women were in such short supply as potential wives it seems that, historically, this issue might arise only infrequently.

Both male and female informants agreed that the "ideal" marraige for a man or woman is with a mote a cateogry of relative that includes the genealogical specifications MBD and FZS. By "ideal" I mean simply that such a marriage would, in my informants' words, be seimen duwa, "a good marriage". Some male informants put the matter in a more normative tone: "If a man gives you his sister as a wife, then your son should marry his daughter". Yet other informants expressed normative implications rather differently. On several occasions I was told, "If a man marries my sister, then I'll marry his daughter". In contrast to the "ideal", the Aekyom recognize certain other types of marriages that, while legitimate or tolerated are, generally speaking, "not good marriages". These include first of all (and for a man) marriage with the genealogical FZD or ZD or any other relative classfied as gute.[64] While not strictly prohibited or "forbidden" (koma) such marraiges when they do take place are regarded by some informants as nononkina. In its "emotionally neutral" sense this term refers to something which is done contrary to custom and tradition. In its more "emotionally charged" meaning, nononkina is used to express strong disapproval of marriage within the local tongesu or family (gile) and it means "absolute stupidity or ignorance". Nononkina is also used to describe incestuous relations (iyaelyo) with the qualification that such behaviour is swokina ("bad") and befits only the sexual behaviour of dogs and pigs. In the case of more distant collateral relatives (e.g., parallel cousins) residing in separate hamlets, marriages between them are "not

good". Nevertheless, sexual relations seem to be permitted if they are carried out "secretly".

Similar marital and sexual restrictions apply to the affines of one's affines with two notable exceptions: marital or sexual relations with owei or amban are regarded as nonɔŋkina and therefore are devalued. Marriages with unrelated individuals, on the other hand, are invariably categorized as mote marriages and therefore considered within the realm of "good marriages", if only by post facto reasoning. Thus strangers or enemies (grinebrene wíkè, totien wíkè) may be converted into mote while the corresponding relationship terms are adjusted accordingly. Significantly, it may be mentioned here that after serveral months in the field, I was assigned the category mote a classification that seems to reflect both distance and familiarity. Initially, I was classified as taubada, a Motuan term meaning "big man", which is usally applied to European-looking foreigners. Finally, no informant expressed a traditional preference for marriage within or outside the hamlet. Endogamy or exogamy at this level was said to be contingent upon prior marriage arrangements or patterns, political circumstances or social conventions, including residence preferences and practices.

There are no "rules" of post-marital residence for men. As stated previously, fathers and senior agnates will attempt to recruit their sons and junior agnates to local hamlet membership, and it is most likely that those men who will eventually succeed to a hamlet title of ownership or benefit from inheritance of property will opt for patrilocal residence. In other cases men will reside with their male affines (brothers-in-law, wife's father), depending on a variety of circumstances such as bride service, tension and conflict with one's own agnates, or the perception of other benefits in doing so.[65] It follows that in cases where affines co-own or co-reside in a single hamlet (e.g., Duduyene), residential options become much more limited. In most cases, a woman resides with her husband regardless of the type of hamlet (e.g., natal or affinal), a practice that corresponds to Aekyom normative statements. it seems reasonable then to describe women's post-marital residence practices as virilocal.

On this evidence it would appear that normative orientations are prominent regarding marriage, especially when contrasted to the practical circumstances of residence patterns. However, the historical and statistical data on Aekyom marriages indicate that the basis of such a normative, asymmetrical orientation to marriage is neither self-evident nor free from alternative practices or structural ambiguities, especially when viewed in the light of the relationship terminology.

Historical Notes on Aekyom Marriage

During the first decade of sustained European contact, administrative patrol officers recorded a number of interesting observations concerning the constraints and limitations of Aekyom marriage. It was universally reported that marriages were restricted to small geographical areas, usually within a hamlet group and less frequently between neighbouring or more distant hamlets.[66] Patrilocality for men and virilocality for women are recorded as the predominant post-marital residence patterns while polygny, especially among old men, appears to have been widespread. However, the form of marriage exchange seems to have varied depending on the time of its recording.

The earliest documentation of Aekyom marriage is by D.R. Hosking, recorded in North and East Awin in 1952. Among these two dialect groups it is reported that,

> Sister exchange, where a man gives his sister in marriage and receives as a bride in exchange the sister of his sister's husband is widely practiced. This sometimes results in instances of child marriage, as when A exchanges his adult sister for B's child sister. It is stated that the marriage ceremony is not fulfilled until the girl child has reached maturity. Where the arrangement is not practicable, the usual exchange or bride price is practiced, using gifts of food (Patrol Report, 1952, Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga; National Archives, Port Moresby).

Unfortunately, Hosking does not indicate what type of marriage is contracted when sister exchange "is not practicable". Nevertheless, his

report of symmetrical or restricted exchange was confirmed three years later by an administrative patrol into South Awin. Here,

> Marriage takes the form of sister exchange usually when the girl is three years of age or even younger, the wife going to live with her husband at about 8 years of age. People claim the marriage is not consummated till the girl reaches puberty, but there is evidence to the contrary.

The report does not state what this evidence might be, but goes on to point out that

> Brothers are discouraged from seeking wives from the same clan [tongesu] as this restricts in-law relationships, the number of which constitutes a source of pride. Polygamy is general and it is rare for a polygamous marriage to embrace sisters (Patrol Report, 1955, Office of the Assistant District COmmissioner, Kiunga; National Archives, Port Moresby).

As late as 1959, the Aekyom practice of "child marriages" continued to generate a short supply of wives for adult males. However, the colonial administration, neither sharing nor recognizing the value of infant betrothal (hidin), attempted to discourage it with variable success (Patrol Report, 1959, Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga; National Archives, Port Moresby). In that same year, a most interesting and curious report was filed in Kiunga following an administrative patrol into South Awin. This time, generalized exchange, based on asymmetrical cross cousin marriage was found to be operative but within certain limits.

> A man will marry his female cousin on his mother's side. But there are few females [i.e., cases] where this is carried out. Over the generations this intermarriage does not develop to any great extent and children of each generation have fairly scattered blood-lines. The bride price for the mother's brother's daugher is not great, consisting of material goods or [traditional?] money [i.e., slai?]. The reasoning by the girl's parents is that the prospective groom should pay extra for this permission to marry someone other than his normal bride [i.e., the MBD] although the latter does not exist [i.e., is unavailable]. (Patrol report, 1959 Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga; National Archives, Port Moresby).

If we choose to consider these historical accounts as equally and generally valid, as complementary rather than conflicting observations on

the nature of Aekyom marriage, then there are a number of conclusions that may be drawn from both sociological and religious perspectives. As a matter of practical sociology, the constraints of reciprocity, restricted exchange (sister exchange) serve to consolidate and interlace separrate lines within a single hamlet or within an area circumscribed by nominally-linked hamlets. Generalized exchange (asymmetrical cross cousin marriage) while accomplishing these tasks goes one step further by gradually moving the system out of parochial confines to embrace additional alliances and, therefore, expand the social, political and economic benefits that flow from such a network. Historically, it would appear that a greater emphasis on hamlet or hamlet group exogamy coincided with the pax Australiana, thereby increasing opportunities for the contraction of asymmetric alliances which added to their value. It is also conceivable that the relationship terminology, as a formal construct, demonstrates considerable flexibility and adaptability under changing environmental conditions without necessarily implying a structural evolution from symmetry to asymmetry. Yet, if restricted exchange is in some way prototypical, the pattern of non-repetitive marriages recorded for the Aekyom[67] is clearly distinct from the classic model of restricted exchange described by Lévi-Strauss (1969). Viewed from a religious perspective, Aekyom sister exchange represents an original or first balanced exchange where the concern is not social bonding but the matching or merging of spiritual qualities. As a religious acknowledgement of bilaterality it expresses equality or identity of being in the spiritual realm. It should follow that the religious significance of asymmetric marriage is to ensure that such a merger does not compromise the integrity of intermarrying agnatic lines. Put another way, asymmetrical cross cousin marriage perpetuates distinct but complementary aims: to promote difference despite the recognition of similarity. This theme is clearly reflected in the relationship terminology and marriage rituals, as well as in the naming system and mythology (see below, and Chapters 5 and 6).

Although the historical record provides significant clues to a religious conception of Aekyom marriage, it is also deficient in its

statistical evidence. Especially crucial for the argument being advanced here is the status of asymmetrical marriage as an ethnographic occurrence. This issue along with other demographic aspects of Aekyom marriage are discussed below.

Statistical Aspects of Aekyom Marriage

Since I have already described how the census data and genealogical information were collected for this study, it remains to clarify how I selected a sample of marriages from the Aekyom population for further description and analysis. My general aim was to provide as full an account as possible of the marriage behaviour (and "allianaces") among hamlets associated with Drimgas village over a certain time period. Therefore, the sample was ideally to include all marriages contracted by hamlet members over three generations which would ensure pre-1950 cases. However, there was a major limiting condition. The identification of patrilateral, matrilateral or affinal relatives at or beyond the second ascending genealogical level was less reliable than that for lower levels in the sense that the former relatives were often at the margins of informants' knowledge or memories. Therefore it was difficult if not impossible to cross check the information I received in this context with the same confidence as that for lower genealogical levels. While this does not necessarily reduce the overall value of the information obtained, it does alert the reader to possible informant fictions.

The general demographic character of the Aekyom population resident in Drimgas village during my field study is described in Table 18. If the 8 absent unmarried adult males are included in the calculations,[68] then the percentage distribution of male and female statuses in the ethnographic population may be presented as shown in Table 19.

As Table 20 shows 5 men contracted 10 polygynous marriages while 41 men contracted 41 monogamous marriages. The

Table 18.

Ethnographic Census, Drimgas VIllage, 1981-82*

Married Adults		Single Adults		Widowed Adults		Children		Absentees	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
46	51	14	11	3	8	44	39	8	-

Total No. Males: 115
Total No. Females: 109
Total Population: 224

* In this census, adulthood is assigned to all males who are married, widowers or initiated. Adult females include all those who are married, widows, or post-pubescent. Absentees include 2 unmarried adult males in jail (at Daru) and 6 unmarried adult males who had emigrated to work camps in the OK Tedi Area prior to fieldwork.
M = male; F = female

Table 19.

Distribution of Social Statuses, Drimgas Village, 1981-82

Category	Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%
Married Adult	46	40	51	47
Single Adult	22	19	11	10
Widowed	3	3	8	7
Child	44	38	39	36
Totals	115	100	109	100

Table 20.

Distribution of Male Marital Statuses and Marriages by Type, Drimgas Village, 1981-82

No. of Men	% of Total Men	Marriage Contracted	Frequency	% of All Marriages
5	11%	polygynous	10	20%
41	89%	monogamous	41	80%
Totals 46	100%		51	100%

* Polygamous marriage is defined as (i) more than one wife resident in husband's hamlet of residents or (ii) at least two women stand in the relationship of wife to any given husband at any given time.

distribution of the types of marriages contracted by adult men is presented in Table 20.

The figures provided by Tables 18, 19 and 20 may now be compared with those estimated for the pre-contact and early post-contact sample of marriages calculated from pedigrees and genealogies collected and constructed in the field. My aim here will be threefold: (i) to supplement the historical information on marriage patterns; (ii) to indicate the changes that have taken place in Aekyom marriage practices during the post-contact era; and (iii) to provide some scope and depth to the relationship between marriage practices and normative orientations.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to add a brief analytical note in order to avoid possible confusion. When documenting marriage patterns observed in the field, individuals and marital roles coincided. Therefore, it was possible and justifiable to present the distribution of social statuses vis-à-vis marital roles in the manner of Tables 18, 19 and 20.[69] However, a diachronic persepctive which emphasizes marital roles is necessary when presenting the pre- and early post-1950 sample of marriages in the form of tables.[70]

The total number of marriages recorded in the pre-contact/early post-contact sample of marriages is 111. These marriages were contracted by 57 husbands and 89 wives, roughly during the period 1910 to the mid or late 1950s. The marriages are distributed according to type in Table 21

The numbers and percentages for polygynous or monagamous marriages among males and females as presented in Table 21 may be exaggerated: too high in the case of polygymous unions and too low for monogamous unions. A likely source of error, together with the constraints on informants' knowledge, is the definition of polygyny used for this sample of marriages. In some cases, it was possible to distinguish between polygyny and serial monogamy. But in others, where there was some uncertainty, a husband with two or more wives during his lifetime was assigned polygynous status. But the degree of error may not be very

Table 21.

Distribution of Marriage by Type, Pre-Contact/Early Post-Contact Sample

Role	Marriage Type	Frequency	Percent
Husband	polygynous	31	54%
	monogamous	26	46%
Wife	polygynous	77	69%
	monogamous	34	31%

great or particularly misleading. On the one hand, patrol reports together with informant statements indicate that polygyny was more prevalent in the past than today. On the other hand, my field data show that only 6 of 46 (13%) married men and 8 of 56 (16%) married women have been involved in serial monogamy.

According to my informants, polygyny, which took advantage of child betrothal (hidin) and usually involved the control over a young girl's marriage by and for senior men, resulted in a shortage of potential wives, especially among younger, eligible bachlors (kwaten knu). Competition for wives seems to have been a constant feature of Aekyom society, where lethal sorcery by men, or less frequently by women, was used to secure wives or "liberate" them from "old men". These observations, therefore, also suggest that fewer husbands controlled more wives during the pre- and early post-contact period when compared with the contemporary marriage situation. Today competition for spouses is less intense and there tend to be more husbands contracting monogamous marriages. This seems to be a result of a number of factors that stem from administrative and Chistian mission influences, including:

(i) disapproval and suppression of polygyny;
(ii) lowering the age of marriage for males;
(iii) raising the age of marriage for females; and
(iv) hamlet/hamlet group exogamy.

Up to this point, therefore, the most significant changes to have taken place in Aekyom marriage practices include the greater frequency of monogamy over polygyny and an increase in the number of husbands relative to the number of wives. These changes raise two important questions. First, how do these changes affect, if at all, Aekyom normative orientations to marriage as may be reflected in contemporary marriage hehaviour? And second, what is the impact of change on affinal relations between hamlets and the status of hamlet "alliances"?

Table 22 provides a breakdown of Aekyom marriages by category for both contemporary and pre-contact/early post-contact marriage samples.

Table 22.

Marriage By Category, Contemporary and Pre-Contact/Early Post-Contact Marriage Samples, Drimgas Village Hamlets

CATEGORY	Contemporary Sample		Pre/Post Contact Sample		Combined Samples	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
mote (genealogical MBD)	11	22%	28	25%	39	24%
mote (genealogical MBD/ZD)	3	6%	8	7%	11	7%
mote (terminological MBD)	19	37%	30	27%	49	30%
mote (no relation)	5	10%	8	7%	13	8%
gute	9	18%	17	15%	26	16%
aepei	--	--	14	13%	14	9%
owei	--	--	3	3%	3	2%
other	4	8%	3	3%	7	4%
TOTALS	51	101%	111	100%	162	100%

Although most marriages, especially those in the pre-contact/early post-contact sample, took place within hamlet security circles, genealogical connections among husbands and wives could not always be traced with complete confidence. As a result, there are marriages in the pre-contact/early post-contact sample where the categories of husband and wife related on the basis of genealogical ties are either contradictory or irresolute and are not, therefore, included in the table. I recorded 20 marriages of this nature. In addition, 30 terminological mote marriages recorded for the pre-contact/early post-contact sample may or may not be an accurate count. Its validity is based partly on informants' statements when genealogical connections between husband and wife could not be traced or were otherwise obscure. However, it is unlikely that informants consciously concealed anomalous marriages in this context by assigning them to the mote category. I found no tendency among them to do so through evasion or deception.

As may be seen from Table 22, Aekyom marriage practice does not always coincide with the "ideal" form of marriage. It is significant, however, that the majority of marriages (69%) in the combined samples do fall within the mote category. Furthermore, almost 1/4 of all marriages are congruent with a genealogical definition of the "ideal" marriage: 24% of Aekyom marriages in the combined samples are contracted with the genealogical MBD/FZS. These figures may not be unique to the Fly River Aekyom. According to Welsch (1979:5,26) the Ningerum had a "mild preference" for asymmetrical cross cousin marriage, while the Alice River Aekyom "seem to have had a prescriptive marriage rule, regularly contracting marriages with the same clans".

But it is no less significant that 31% of marriages in the combined samples are "not good". It may be assumed, of course, that demographic contingencies such as the unavailability of a "good wife" will affect the "ideal" pattern, skewing the distribution of marriages in the opposite direction. However, it is on somewhat different grounds that these marriages become especially interesting.

Table 23.

Gute and Aepei Marriages:
Contemporary and Pre-Contact/Early Post-Contact Samples

CATEGORY/ DESCRIPTION	Contemporary Sample		Pre/Post Contact Sample		Combined Samples	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
gute						
genealogical ZD	2	4%	8	7%	10	6%
terminological ZD	3	6%	3	3%	6	4$
terminological FZD	1	2%	-	--	1	1%
genealogical FZSD	2	4%	3	3%	5	3%
terminological D	1	2%	3	3%	4	2%
TOTALS	9	18%	17	16%	26	16%
aepei						
terminological Ze	-	--	14	13%	14	9%

Table 23 provides further information on marriages that are "not good" by detailing the genealogical correlates of the terminological categories gute and aepei that appear in Table 22.

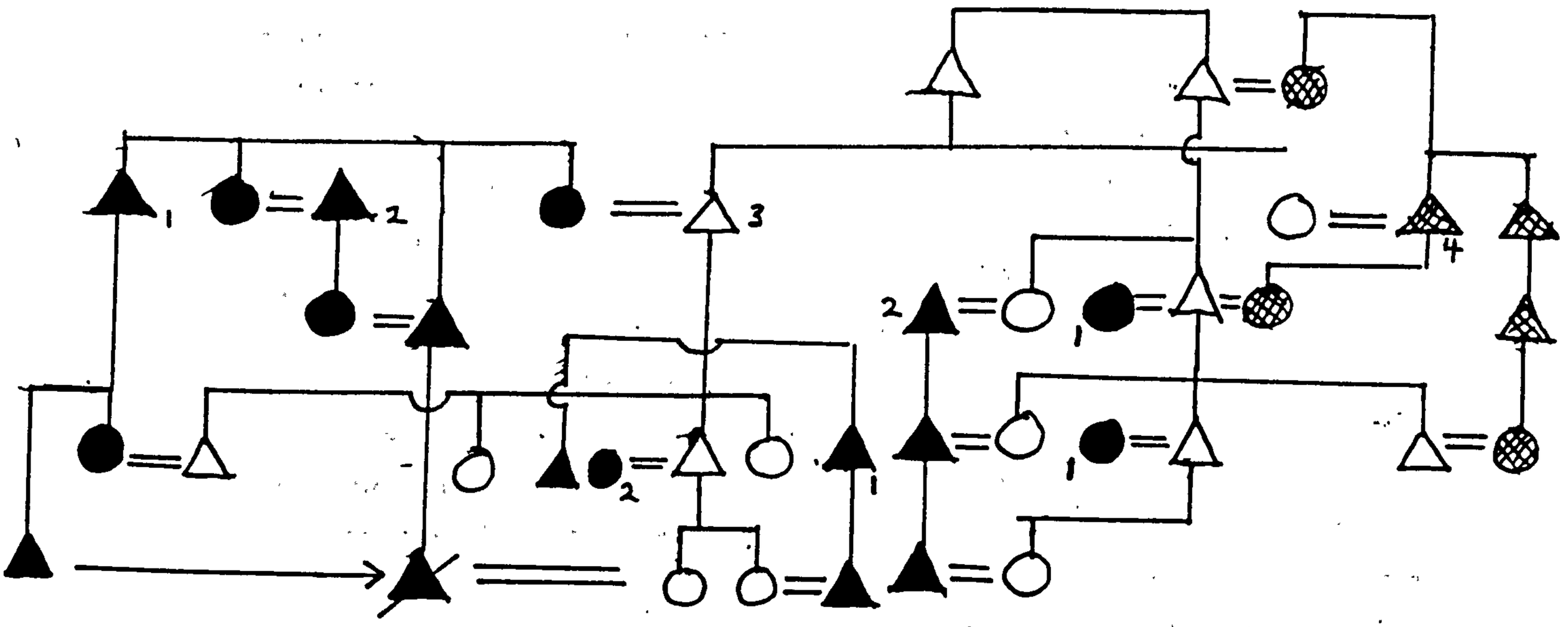
According to my records, 15 (58%) gute marriages in the combined samples are contracted within a security circle defined by Graihei, Piduwenai, Skikokei and Hutienai hamlets. Of these, 73% (11 of 15) involve the Gre hamlets of Piduwenai and Skikokei. But that is not all. It is striking that among the 33 cases of sister exchange[71] occurring in the combined sample of marriages, 17 (52%) involve the Gre of Piduwenai or Skikokei hamlets. Furthermore, nearly 50% (5 of 11) of the recorded cases of ambiguous MBD/ZD marriages which effect symmetrical exchange (e.g., Riviere, 1966; Good, 1980) are found among these same Gre. This closing in of marital relations within increasingly restricted social and geographic spheres reaches an extreme in tongesu endogamy. There are 14 endogamous marriages recorded at this level which involve the category aepei. Significantly 50% (7 of 14) of these marriages are contracted by Gre members of Piduwenai and Skikokei hamlets. These facts raise an obvious question: why are these Gre hamlets in particular associated with symmetrical forms of marriage exchange?

Before I answer this question, it is important to point out that symmetrical marriages do not compromise the postion of the Gre hamlets within their wider security circle that includes the Drim and Dua hamlets of Graihei and Hutienai, respectively. As Diagram 4 indicates, the Gre, in harmony with the marriage behaviours of the Drim and Dua, also contract asymmetrical allian.ces within the security circle.

Only a fraction of the actual genealogical space which circumscribes marriage transactions among the four hamlets is represented here for reasons of space. However, it is sufficient to illustrate the nature of inter-hamlet marital and political alliances. The diagram shows symmetrical forms of exchange (e.g., genealogical ZD marriage) as well as repetitive asymmetrical cross cousin marriages. It also indicates the creation of a buffer zone, through hamlet overlap, between hamlets that

DIAGRAM 4.

AEKYOM SECURITY CIRCLES



Code:	I	Colour	Tongesu	Number	Hamlet
		black	Gre	1	Piduwenai
		white	Drim	2	Skikokei
		cross-hatch	Dua	4	Hutienaia

II deceased

→ leviratic marriage

PAGE NUMBERING AS ORIGINAL

neither intermarry nor fight with one another (e.g., the Gre hamlets in relation to the Dua of Hutienai). What the diagram does not indicate, however, is the relative population sizes of the hamlets under consideration. Members of the Gre clan are by far the most populous group and contract the greatest number of marriages (see Appendix 2). While the Gre constitute 24% of the contemporary population of Drimgas-associated hamlets, they contract 31% of the marriages. These facts suggest a sociological or demographic hypothesis: the frequency of symmetrical forms of marital exchange varies directly with the size of the hamlet population. This hypothesis may be tested by referring to the data on alliances in Appendix3 . But, the hypothesis, as it stands, may require some qualification. First, comparative evidence suggests it should be placed in a political context. For example, Welsch (1979:26) describes an important constraint on marriage practices among the neighbouring Ningerum who practice asymmetrical and symmetrical forms of exchange. Under certain specified demographic and political circumstances the tendency towards asymmetric marriage may be altered.

> Marriage between members of the same local clan segment occurred only in larger groups and it is these groups which are most likely to break up. Thus, endogamous marriages helped to strengthen a local clan segment's security circle by counteracting the tendency to segment.

It may also be added that tongesu or hamlet endogamy would likely place men and women in a favourable position to assert usufruct rights in natal hamlet lands. Thus, Welsch's comments, mutatis mutandis, seem applicable to the Aekyom situation. Unfortuantely, I have no independent historical evidence of the process of segmentation among Aekyom hamlets. My only source of information on this topic is Aekyom oral tradition. Interestingly, migration stories (hamasakweila swa) and some myths (song swa) emphasize the segmentation of tongesu among the larger groups such as the Gre, Gasei, Demesuke and Somi. However, these tales seem always to have a dual focus. In addition to political confrontation and demographic change, there is invariably a religious theme. Viewed in religious terms, symmetrical exchange and group segmentation imply two interrelated issues: (i) the recombination of original spiritual qualities or the reinstatement of the primary conditions for the transmission of

spiritual qualities; and (ii) the differentiation of the donors and recipients of spiritual powers. The extent to which marriage may be defined as a spiritual relationship is a theme that may also be examined in a ritual context. I turn now to a consideration of Aekyom marriage rites.

The Rituals of Marriage

Today, Aekyom marriage rituals are in decline largely as a result of the impact of Christian mission influences, particularly the attempt to replace traditional marriage ceremonies with Christian rites.[72] Christian "marriages" are now more frequently performed among the Aekyom than in the past and in some areas distinctive Aekyom rituals have disappeared altogether. However, as suggested in Chapter 2, distinctive Aekyom cultural themes permeate all aspects of life despite efforts by some foreigners to suppress them. More importantly, traditional marriage rituals may still be performed among the Fly River Aekyom who provided the occasion for the following observations.

General Conditions

All Aekyom ritual and ceremonial gatherings demand the gathering and preparation of large quantities of food. It is partiuclarly important that meat and sago be the main foods exchanged and eaten during the rites and accompanying feast. Thus, marriage rituals may require several months of prior preparation since new sago must be harvested, animals such as pig, cassowary, and fish hunted, and sago grubs and other bush foods collected. Thus the food prepared must be of sufficient quantity to satisfy the bride price (pule) or the balanced exchanges that invariably take place between intermarrying groups.[73] Certain types of valuables obtained through trade or inheritance are also exchanged during the rites. These items may either be worn as ornaments or stored in string bags made specifically for this purpose. Finally, various materials will be gathered together and used later for the purpose of decorating and

painting the bodies of the bride and groom. These usually include bird of paradise feathers, dog's teeth, beads, earth pigments and string.

Traditionally, all males were initiated in the komenai prior to marriage. While male initiation may be on the decline, the Aekyom are adamant that marriages involving uninitiated males will be "difficult": e.g., plagued by domestic squabbles, individual greed, and adultery. Although there are no initiation rites for females, it is customary – though not always the practice today – for the bride to be sexually but not socially immature for her first marriage.

According to my informants, it is not necessary that a man dance sia[74] prior to or as a preliminary to the marriage rites. However, dancing sia has several benefits that have an important bearing on a man's prospects for marriage. Dancing sia provides an opportunity for male display and dancing ability which are considered to be a direct reflection of male virility and masculine skills such as hunting. Both are important considerations for intermarrying groups concerned with issues of social reproduction and economic services. And for the individual dancer and observer it provides a setting for "romantic intrigues".

Finally, marriage rites are performed for a first marriage only. Second and subsequent marriages following the death of a spouse, divorce or abandonment are demonstrated and legitmated by joint residence in a hamlet and the provisioning of complementary services such as the exchange of meat for sago. Where first marriages are also polygynous, the brides are all equal participants in the rites.

The Events

Traditionally, "envoys" monitor each hamlet's state of preparation by passing information between them on their mutual progress and offer verbal "support" to obviate unnecessary delays. When all are ready, the groom, his agnates and members of his hamlet leave in the morning and journey to the bride's hamlet, where they will exchange food and valuables

and participate in other events.[75] Upon the arrival of the groom's party, greetings are exchanged amidst much smiling, jocularity and laughter, which are continually punctuated (among men) by the characteristic Aekyom handshake (krinte alasilia). As people gather together in sex specific assemblages and retire to the utio or rine of the hamlet house current events are discussed, tobacco is smoked and small amounts of cooked sago and bananas are eaten (the "hosts" usually supplying these foods). By this time it is late morning or early afternoon. Attention then shifts to the ritual preparation of the bride and groom. First, the bride is taken by her senior female agnates, mother and female matrilateral relatives, and female cross cousins a short distance into the bush and out of the sight of males where her body is painted with ochre (sangene) and dotted with spots of white clay (dronge), usually on the front of the torso. Variable lengths of string are tied round her head and below the knees, just above the calf muscle (sikei), and a large string loop is worn in a criss-cross over the chest and under the arms. Woven tikei bands resembling snake skin are wrapped around her wrists and biceps, and a long smuda necklace made from string and "Job's Tears" is draped around her neck. Finally the bride puts on a new grass skirt, while bird of paradise plumes are fixed to the string around her forehead. Then, a dog's tooth, attached to a string, is tied around her baby finger (kiangei). While the women are attending to the bride, the men proceed with the groom's ritual dressing, which in terms of painting and adornment is identical to that of the bride's. Significantly, ensuring this form of ritual duplication is the primary responsiblity of the groom's aepua.

Once the ritual dressings are completed, everyone returns to the house, the men accupying the utio and the women the rine. At this point, the bride proceeds to cook a ritual category of sago wrapped in the yaem giti leaves. This is a special long and cylindrical sago called da kwene. After it is cooked, the sago is taken by the bride to the partition (irine) separating the men's and women's quarters. Here she passes it through the partition hole (inam) to her husband. With the bride holding one end of the sago and the groom holding the other, the sago is broken in half.

Next, the bride breaks off a small piece of sago from her half, chews it, then gives it to her husband. The groom places the chewed sago in a small string bag called aela sukmen gwae, which in turn is put into a larger string bag called pule deme bi gwae. The remaining sagohalves are not, however, eaten by the bride or groom. The sago is distributed among their respective agnates, matrilateral and affinal relatives who break off small sections of sago and eat them. As soon as the sago has been eaten by these groups, the groom sets off in pursuit of a small black bird called toknai, a type of honey-eater (slile) which feeds on the nectar of various tree flowers. Having shot and killed toknai with his bow and arrow, he removes the bird's wing and tail feathers and puts them in a water well or reservoir located a short distance from the hamlet house. Here he is joined by his bride, where both drink water from the reservoir. Consuming only a small amount of water, they quickly finish and then proceed to a small creek located a short distance from the hamlet house. Standing on the creek bank, the groom searches the water for signs of the mineya fish. When he spots the fish, he raises his bow and arrow and takes aim. As he does this, his bride steps up behind him and grasps his arched elbow with her hand. In this position, the groom fires the arrow and, with remarkable accuracy, shoots the fish (bun tien). Once the fish is retrieved by the groom, the couple return to the hamlet house where, along with some sago, the fish is coooked by the bride and eaten by the newlyweds. When this meal is completed, the dog tooth amulet is removed from their fingers. A tooth is kept by each and then strung together with other teeth on a dog's teeth necklace to be passed down specific lines of inheritance.

Follwing a brief pause to ensure that the gifts are ready, the ceremonical exchange of food and valuables begins. The first gift (dae) given by the groom and his agnates is the brideprice (pule). This includes a variety and number of valuables which may be claimed and worn by the bride's father, mother, patrilateral or matrilateral relatives. Table 24 lists those items that are commonly included in the brideprice. Prior to their distribution, these valuables are placed on top of raw pork, sago and bananas that, as gifts of food, are claimed by the bride's

Table 24.

Brideprice Valuables

Item	Description
skwene	large, white shell (Melo sp.) chest pendant
sisyene	shell (Massarius sp.) head band
psaen pete	dog tooth necklace
min pete	pig tusk necklace
mani	small river shell
gomsele	small river shell resembling a clam shell
smuda	necklace of "Job's Tears"
twi	headband of trade store beads

agnates. Significantly, if the groom's father-in-law is not also his genealogical MB, the latter and his agnates will contribute to this supply of food-as-brideprice. When marriages encompass groups previously linked by similar ties, the exchange of valuables and food is reciprocal and usually balanced. Presentation of the brideprice, therefore, is often followed by an equivalent presentation of valuables[76] and food by the bride's kin. Such balanced reciprocity suggests two inter-linked notions. Following Sahlins (1972) it suggests an element of social distance or differentiation of group identity. But from a religious point of view, it indicates an equation of ritual statuses which parallels the matching of spiritual qualities involved in an original or first symmetrical marriage exchange. These points are underscored by the Kwiakwiamen dance which punctuates the giving of the marriage gifts.

Linguistically, the term kwiakwiamen consists of the smaller segement kwia and men. Men means "with" while kwia seems to be the root of kwiawe, a bird closely identified with death and transition in the human and spiritual worlds. Consistently, these themes are reflected in the timing and nature of the dance which takes place from dusk to dawn and draws on the imagery of war, an intensely spiritual antagonistic encounter between beings with supernatural attributes.

With the notable exception of the groom's father, the male kin and male affinal relatives of the bride and groom are poised, with bow and arrows in hand, to dance kwiakwiamen. In general, the dance consists of a number of successive solo performances where each dancer walks back and forth the length of the utio carrying his bow and arrows. When he has reached one end of the utio the dancer executes several scissors-like strides, turns round, and then walks back to the opposite end of the utio where the same dance step will be repeated. Occasionally, the dancer will pause and offer advice to the newly-weds. However, all speeches of this nature invaviably begin and end with the war cry, wu wu wu, etc. Each solo performance lasts 10 to 15 minutes or longer. When it is completed, the dancer sits down and another but identical solo performance begins.

The first man to dance is the bride's aepua, who also usually sets the tone as it were for the kind of advice given to the bride and groom. As he alternately faces the audiences in the utio and rine, the aepua shouts,

> Woman, you must not spoil your husband, you must be kind, look after each other, be kind to your affines, do not be greedy, share with everyone.

Then, turning to the male audience, he admonishes the groom:

> Do not play around with other women or your wife will not mature [i.e., will not bear children].

Finally, turning to the bride, he warns,

> Do not carry on with other men or your pregnancy and birth will be difficult.

The themes of marriage stability and reproduction are repeated and elaborated by the next dancer, which is invariably the groom's FeB (kiguam), or elder brother (angei). Following this, the order of dance performances by kinship status is based on no specific pattern as it moves outward to encompass male members of wider kin groups. With the completion of kwiakwiamen, the bride and groom retire to their post-marital hamlet before carrying out the remaining acts of the marriage rituals.

At some time during the morning, the groom goes out into the bush and builds a hunting blind (irine) near the nest of a bush turkey (dyanai). he then returns to the hamlet house where the married couple remains relatively inactive throughout the rest of the day and sleep overnight. At daybreak, the groom goes back to the hunting blind where he hopes to find and shoot the bush turkey in the vicinity of its nest. If successful, the bird is retrieved and its legs bound to its neck.[77] The hunter then slings the bird over his shoulder and returns to the hamlet house. Standing at the base of the ladder leading to the rine he calls for his wife. She appears with string bag (gwae hiyenu) and fire tongs (snapen) in hand and, grasping the bush turkey with the tongs, puts the bird in the string bag. The bride then removes its remaining feathers and roasts the meat over the dine (fireplace). When cooked, the bride and groom share the meat and when they have eaten their fill, distribute the

remaining meat to other members of the hamlet. As a final act, the groom takes some feathers of the bush turkey and places them in the string bag called aê|a sukemɛngwae.

Discussion

While it is not immediately apparent, it may be demonstrated that the religious content of Aekyom marriage rites develops within fixed and continuous structures that define individual and group identities and their interrelations. To wit, concepts of constancy and renewal, ritualized opposition and the spiritual significance of cultural and natural categories for the acquisition and transmission of supernatural powers form the core around which Aekyom comprehension of the human condition evolves. Thus, it is argued that Aekyom marriage rituals reconstruct and carry out the primary principles and conditions of existence. The resulting imagery falls into familiar categories; themes are repeated and elaborated in such a way that religious ideas enmesh otherwise separate categories of nature, culture and supernature (cf. Durkheim, 1961; Gell, 1975). Ultimately, it is the religious expression of the ambiguity of descent group membership, re-presented during the marriage rites, that sustains the original integrity of otherwise separate agnatic lines in contemporary Aekyom society.

In general, birds and bird symbolism serve to articulate successive phases of the marriage rites and, therefore, draw particular attention to the place of birds in defining individual and group identities and their interrelations.

In Aekyom thought, birds (smele) are identified with the male vertical dimension of the above: they not only fly in the sky but also live, build nests and reproduce high above in the tree tops. It is not unreasonable then to suggest that the religious logic of bird representations in the marriage rites should be concerned not only with "maleness" but also with its reproduction. This proposition is immediatley

confirmed by the ritual status of the bride and groom at the beginning of the rites which sets the tone as it were for the rites as a whole. Both the predominance of red paint (ochre) on the skin and the conspicuous bird of paradise plumes projecting upward from the forehead cast the bride and groom in the image of ri, the Raggiana bird of paradise (Paradisaea Raggi. ana). But it is not a static image. The colour red and the positioning of the plumes create a transitional ambience for the bride and groom that draws on the symbolic significance of ri, when in courtship display, for the reproduction of gender categories in the human world.

In order to attract a mate for the purpose of sexual intercourse and reprodcution, the Ragianna bird of paradise hangs upside down on its display perch and spreads its tail and flank plumes which project straight upwards, towards the sky. The inversion between body and plumes/feathers in vertical space is interesting from mythological and sociological points of view. It will be recalled that in the story of how the kmu bird tricked flying fox, the latter is "reproduced" as a featherless creature that hangs upside down. Originally, bird and flying fox were identical — they both possessed feathered wings/tail. But flying fox's inability to stand upright cost him his feathered wings/tail and created a new identity. This process of differentiation results in the following equations:

(i) kmu bird + feathered wings/tail + upright ≅ male dimension

(ii) flying fox + featherless body + upside down ≅ female dimension

Significantly, the differentiation of gender categories on the basis of inversions in vertical space is also reflected in the language of kinship where the issue of reproduction is implicit. For example, ai ("father") also means "to grow up or stand up tall and straight". In contrast, "to hang upside down" (like a child in the womb) is covered by the term yaemgo. Yaemgo may be broken down into the compound word yaem which means "his/her mother" or "you and your mother", and the affix go which as a prefix distinguishes a bird's tail or gosume from, say, a pig's tail, sume, both of which point or hang down.

As pointed out earlier, the inversions in space which differentiate

bird and flying fox from an original common stock create considerable ambiguity for Aekyom classification. But this is precisely what the inverted plume and the colour "red" accomplish for the bride and groom: opposed gender categories are united in the image of ri which, above all else, has reproductive and symbolic value for the Aekyom at the levels of ritual and classification. Indeed, I suggest that it is ri's courtship/ reproductive behaviour that is of social interest to the Fly River Aekyom who classify the displaying mate as female, despite its Western ornithological status as sexually male. Yet, at the same time, Aekyom mythology and informants' statements are not always unequivocal regarding gender identities among birds of paradise. Among the Aekyom of South Awin, for example, beautifully-coloured worin that perform courtship displays are regarded as ambiguously male or female.

The purpose of courtship is, of course, to unite and to reproduce. Mythologically, the original union of opposites via the matching of original qualities is to produce difference or similarities between the differences (cf. Lévi-Strauss, 1963). Sociologically, the ritual union of bride and groom is to produce difference from similarity at the level of social relationships: i.e., ritual relationships that minimize differences between the identities of bride and groom (or wife and husband) for the purpose of reproduction, aim to maximize similarities between the identities of father and son, or reproduce an agnatic relation. Mythologically, these principles appear in the guise of "asymmetrical completion" and differentiation via reciprocal action". If myth, as Goldman (1975:146) suggests, "... sets forth the primary conditions that are to be carried out in ritual", then the marriage rites must pursue a religious logic that posits the dialectical opposition of spiritual qualities in the process of renewing or tranforming group (tei) differences. The bird of paradise is an appropriate model for this process as it is at the core of expressions and transformations of supernatural powers. Its own birth, according to myth, is predicated on the transformational power of fire which, significantly enough, is mediated by the tei tree. Therefore, the vitality of groups (tei) must rest on the cycle of transformation and renwal of spiritual qualities.

This theme may, first of all, be recognized in the bride's and groom's personal adornment which symbolically enhance the properties of the bird of paradise. The equivalent of snake's skin around the wrists requires no further comment. It does, however, draw attention to the dog's tooth amulet tied on the "baby" finger or kiángei. The symbolic importance of this detail is an issue that may be discussed more completely later on. That the bride in particular is a central focus for renewal is suggested by her new "grass" skirt. In Aekyom thought, women's "grass" skirts are the symbolic equivalents of bird feathers, an association found elsewhere in Papua New Guinea (e.g., Feld, 1982). The fact that this ritual "grass" skirt (da parine) is made from the strands of a young sago shoot (da kane) reaffirms this connection (see below). Thus the removal of an old "grass" skirt for a new one parallels the molting of birds of paradise which is recognized by the Aekyom to be an indicator of reproductive potential.

It is particuarly striking then that linguistically and symbolically, the bird of paradise is equivalent to a variety of cultivated sago also known as ri. Unfortunately, I failed to ask if the ritual sago, da kwene (or gwene), is made from the ri sago palm. Nevertheless, sago and the bird of paradise are interlinked, ritually and mythologically,[78] in the symbolic expression of sexual intercourse and reproduction that explicity relate to the themes of transformation and the cycle of rebirth. Linguistically, da gwene has an unmistakable association with intercourse, supernatural power, transformation and aspects of group identity. Consider, for example, the following list of words:

(i) yomgwen, mgwentalin wíkè – categories of Aekyom magicians who wield supernatural powers (hu) for the purposes of healing the sick and restoring health;

(ii) da gwen – the sago filter cloth, made from the bark fibres of the dmi tree which are also used in the manufacture of the sago string bag; its purpose is to tranform sago pith (ambuke) into edible

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starch (hu).

(iii) gwenkei — small nodes located in the groin; mythologically, transformed into flint stones, or tonge; tonge are "scratched" (tila, "to scratch", "to have sexual intercourse") in order to make fire.

As a ritual category of sago, da gwene would appear to represent a source of supernatural power, sexual in nature and, therefore, transmittable, spiritual in quality and, therefore, transformable. The phallic symbolism of the long, cylindrical sago is apparent while the passing of the sago through the hole in the partition separating bride and groom, female and male, would appear to be a representation of sexual intercourse. But why is the sago broken in half? More curiously, why is the sago consumed by groups in contrast to the bride who merely chews it and then gives it to the groom for storage in string bags? The answers to these questions are closely interrelated. First, the breaking of the sago in half immediately suggests a bilateral principle. But what is its form? Following Van Gennep (1960:24), if it is assumed that the sharing of a meal is a rite of incorporation or re-union, then group consumption of the sago represents bilateral group interest and involvement in the fertility and birth cycle. This proposition in turn raises an important question: what is the nature of this bilateral group interest and involvement? The first clue is to be found at the level of reciprocal action where the bride and groom exchange sago. Significantly, only the bride breaks off a piece of the sago and chews it. While this seems to be the metaphorical equivalent of "eating penis" and, therefore, the first step in the cycle of reproduction, it is important to note that here "insemination" is incomplete: the bride only chews the sago, then passes it back through the partition hole to her husband. Put another way, this ritual exchange of sago reverse the fertility process. Consistent with the image of the bird of paradise which is "ritually inverted", the groom's reproductive qualities are matched with those of the bride's. However, the ritual ambiguity of the bride and groom in this context implies a further reversal vis-à-vis social reproduction: i.e., the ritual opposition

between husband and wife with respect to the cycle of renewal. It should follow that the power of sago/semen is restored and transformed when placed in the string bags. Indeed, the nature of the string bags concerned not only illustrates the religious opposition between husband and wife, male and female, but also provides the second clue to the meaning of bilateral group involvement in the fertility process and cycle of renewal.

As noted previously, the groom places the chewed sago in a very small string bag called aela sukmen gwae. Unfortunately, I am not able to provide a complete linguistic description of the status of this string bag. Gwae, of course, is the generic term for string bag. Aela means "to sleep" or "to hang down", and suggests an association with transition and differentiation. The precise meaning of the word sukmen, however, remains a mystery. I would suggest, nevertheless, that it is a reflection of "male power", a theme indicated by the classifcation of the string bag in conjunction with its symbolic status. Aela sukmen gwae is made from the bark fibres of the gon tree and, therefore, is "on the men's side". More importantly, it is and contains a power that is antithetical to the bride. If the groom (or a husband) were to burn this string bag, he would kill the bride (or a wife). Thus the role of the aela sukmen gwae in the rite's system of religious oppositions is to redefine the reproductive character of the marriage relationship by: (i) reversing the fertility process; and (ii) transforming the powers of life into its dialectical opposite, death. In religious terms it follows that the groom must assume the status of "killer" in the cycle of ritual renewal, an implication confirmed by later stages of the marriage rites. However, the power of transformation and death is not simply contained in the aela sukmen gwae since this string bag is in turn put into the string bag called pule deme bi. The latter string bag then must in some sense match the supernatural power of the smaller aela sukmen gwae and, therefore, be integral to its meaning at a more comprehensive cultural level. This view acquires considerable credibility when the contents, linguistic identification and socio-symbolic status of pule deme bi gwae are systematically taken into account.

In addition to the aela sukmen gwae, the larger pule deme bi string bag contains a penis case (amo), twi shell headband, and patches of pig and cassowary skin and/or feathers. As I have already suggested, the penis case is a sign of "maleness" which in Aekyom society has important implications for lineal identity and descent group membership. Not surprisingly, a father often makes his son's first amo. However, the penis case may also be inherited from the aeipua and it is this amo that is usually kept in the pule deme bi gwae. This is an important point since it parallels the social significance of the pig and cassowary skin and/or feathers which are also inherited from the aepua. But these items also have a spiritual significance. When a man shoots his first pig and cassowary, a small patch of skin or skin and feathers is cut out from around the fatal arrow wound and attached to the bow. These animal remains are said by the Aekyom to mystically enhance the killing power of the bow and bowman. Now, on the death of the aepua, a man inherits these remains and keeps them in the pule deme bi string bag when he is not hunting. Thus, a "power to kill" is transmitted from aepua to aentmin, a supernatural gift that parallels the inheritance of aela sukmen gwae from the MB (aepua). But "killing power" in this context involves a religious element. "Removable" skin, for example, has an important bearing on the emergence of life from death, a theme central to the religious logic of hunting (Goldman, 1975). It is a reasonable expectation, then, that cassowary feathers, or more generally bird feathers, share in this expression of the religious dialectic. This raises three important questions: first, why pig skin and cassowary feathers?; second, what is the connection between these remains and the penis case or, more abstractly, "maleness" and group identity and membership?; and third, what bearing do these items have on the meaning of the pule deme bi gwae in particular, and the marriage relationship in general?

A recurrent theme of Aekyom collective representations is the idea of reproducing or reaffirming difference under a constraint of original similarity or identity of being. A particular expression of this general theme was found in the story about bird and flying fox who, while originally feathered creatures, became differentiated in terms of a dual

oppostion:

(i) feathered — featherless

(ii) male domain — female domain

Interestingly enough, pig and cassowary, whose origins (or rebirth) are traced to the bisection of a human female body or common gestation and rebirth in a string bag may be opposed on the basis of these same criteria. Structurally, then,

Pig : cassowary :: featherless : feathered :: female : male.

More importantly, the collective representations referred to above all draw on the symbolic properties of the relationships between cross sex siblings, cross cousins and "affines", particularly the relationship between aepua (MB/WF) and aentmin (ZS/DH). As totemic themes, these social relationships are integral to the meaning of pule deme bi gwae.

This issue may be approached, first of all, through language. The lingusitic identification of the string bag in question is based on the association of three words: pule + deme + bi. The word pule also denotes "brideprice" and in some sense lends the social meaning of "brideprice string bag" to pule deme bi gwae. While the notion of exchange is important, there is another meaning to pule which draws on the symbolisms of death and, implicitly, segments pu and le. Pu is derived from puen, meaning "dead body" while le is a siffux indicating, I think, "bird status". For example, the "class" (téi) of birds is called smele (sme + le) while an important totemic bird ancestor, the white cockatoo, is called demele (deme + le). These comments provide a convenient focus for the remaining linguistic components of the string bag. Deme is the root of demekina, meaning "white" (deme + kina, from kitkina, "to paint"), while bi has the meaning "bird chick/baby" as in smele bi. Bearing in mind the spiritual connotations of the colour "white" (the spirits of the dead, for example, have white skin) it is not unreasonable to suggest that pule deme bi gwae provides a linguistic focus on the reproduction or rebirth of "birdness" which in Aekyom thought is a function of male spiritual power.[79] Significantly, the killing of birds and the manipulation of their feathers and featherless carcasses for ritual

purposes are recurrent themes of the marriage rites.

The killing of the toknai bird by the groom is the first concrete expression of this particular religious issue which provides an important symbolic focus on the masculine process of killing. The spiritual significance of toknai may be traced to its particular black colour and its more general property as a feathered creature that flies. In Aekyom thought the colour balck (hukina) is associated with mortal beings and killing/death. For example, humans are black, warriors are painted black in anticipation of killing, and sorcerers (apayene) kill at night, a category of temporal blackness (hune). However, the meaning of "black" cannot be dissociated from "white" with which it stands in dialectical oppostion. Hunguam or "Night Man", for example, is both night ("black") and day ("white"). Therefore, black is one aspect of an oppositional relation of transformation. Again, a concrete expression of this relation is the black and white pied shrike (kriaewe) whose form is assumed by old people during the transition from human to spiritual status.

If black is a particular expression of supernatural powers among birds, then feathers and/or their properties draw attention to its more general symbolic correlates. The general importance of bird feathers is suggested, first of all, by the fact that they adorn the walls of the domestic hamlet house. This is not simply a matter of interior decoration but a symbolic practice that has ritual and mythological importance (see below and Chapter 6). Secondly, feathers like human body hair with which they are linguistically identified (kupe) are a focus of growth and change: both indicate, for example, stages of sexual development in birds and humans respectively. Thirdly, feathers are closely associated with supernatural powers. For example, environmental forces such as wind and rain are transformations of anthropomorphic beings who wear bird feathers while dancing (Depew, 1982). It may be concluded with some confidence then that feathers are a source of transformational power. However, there is an important detail in the marriage rites which draws our attention to the specific structural form of this power. The groom removes the bird's wing and tail feathers which are then placed in the

well. This raises an apparently trivial question: why wing and tail feathers? But upon further examination, this detail may be seen to be crucial to the structural properties of this stage of the rites.

Let us first consider the wings. It is the wings in particular that the Aekyom associate with birds' occupation of the male domain. Wings give birds the power of flight, which linguistically reflects their inherent powers. The verb "to fly", hulitra, consists of the verb stem tra "to go up", and the meaningful segments li and hu. Li conveys the idea of generative power, a concrete example of which are the seeds (li) of sago palms. Hu, on the other hand, refers to spiritual power, or powers of transformation. That bird wings and their powers of transformation are especially linked to males may be inferred from another linguistic parallel. The term for wing p'i is similar to pi, meaning drum. Elsewhere (Depew, 1982) I have argued that drums, an exclusive male possession, are instruments of transformation played by men wearing bird feathers during ritual dance performances. Specifically, drums faciliate the matching or exchange of male and female supernatural powers. This conclusion then draws our attention to bird tails. Much of the symbolism of drums focuses on the lower parts of the body, and in particular the anus. In Aekyom thought, bird tails are spatially identified with the anus, "down below", a female dimension. These observations suggest the following analogy:

wings : tail :: male : female.

Given this equation, it is striking that in Aekyom mythology a prototypical ground "bird", the cassowary, once had wings (p'i) and a white tail. However, these were exchanged for the "hands" (krinte) and massive black tail feathers of the hornbill, who today as a result of the exchange possesses the power of flight. Significantly, despite their identity at the level of exchange in this myth, the cassowary and hornbill belong to different tei: hornbill is a member of smele ("birds") while cassowary is the sole representative of the tei called monai (cf. Bulmer, 1967). This constellation of ideas draws attention to the dialectical image of "birdness" and to the nature of the constraints (exchange, "matching" of supernatural qualities and powers) on its reproduction. It would appear then that these ideas are given particular expression by the opposition between the tail and wing feathers of the

toknai bird, which are placed in the water well. Water, as we have seen, represents an original source of creation and a symbolic focus for the reproduction of agnatic relations. This process, however, is premised, among other things, on marriage. Thus, when the bride and groom drink from the well littered with the tail and wing feathers, it seems reasonable to say that the supernatural powers of the feathers are being exchanged or transferred between male and female identities in a symbolic process of mutual insemination. This proposition is immediately confirmed by the following ritual conditions and acts.

It is striking that the hunting and shooting of the mineya fish should immediately follow the rites associated with the feathers of the toknai bird. The proximity of their ritual treatment in time as well as in space suggests that in some sense the fish is a substitute for the feathers. If this is the case, then the killing and ritual eating of the mineya fish (with sago) should express similar dialectical themes at the levels of sexuality, procreation and renewal.

The sexual nature of the killing is confirmed by language. The term buntien has two meanings which are closely interrelated. As a noun, buntien denotes the four-pronged fishing arrow; and as a verb, buntien means "to shoot fish". The key word, however, is tien which has both sexual and aggressive connotations. On the one hand, tien refers to sexual intercourse, a reflection of which is the term waitien, a euphemism for male or female genitals. On the other hand, tien is a segment of totien, an adjective descriptive of one's enemies and adversaries in war (twalitila).[80] As spiritual and ritual acts, sex and antagonism are descriptive of the general conditions under which powers may be transmitted and transformed (cf. Gell, 1975; Goldman, 1975). The aim of the "sexual/aggressive" killing of the mineya fish is unquestionably procreative. This is clearly indicated by the bride's grasping of the groom's elbow with her hand. Significantly, both the hand and the elbow (kringgwote) are models for procreation.[81] But it is also clear that the procreative act is predicated on a killing. This suggests that the shooting and subsequent eating of the mineya fish is not simply a ritual statement

about birth, but about rebirth or renewal. These conclusions raise two obvious questions: first, "Why fish?" and second, "Why the mineya fish?". Gell (1975) has already drawn attention to the remarkable capacity of fish to reproduce and renew the species. Among the Aekyom, fish represent a constant supply of food, for they are always available in the rivers and creeks nearby. Furthermore, they also include within the category bun, eels and prawns, creatures that are also likened to snakes either in terms of appearance or in terms of a capacity to renew their existence by shedding their skins.[82] The properties of constancy and immortality are also reflected in particular names for various types of fish. Bro denotes

one variety of fish as well as a stone mallet used in warfare. Finally, as featherless creatures, that "substitute" for feathers, fish stand in dialectical opposition to feathered birds. Why then the mineya fish? Linguistically, mineya is a compound word consisting of the segments mine and ya. Mine denotes the pig as well as a totemic ancestor, for example, of the Gre tongesu. It also has female, affinal or matrilateral connotations testified by its place in Aekyom society, mythology and as a component (raw meat) of the brideprice, pule, given tothe bride's kin. The suffix ya seems to convey the idea of transmittable and transformable power: for example, the sentence teiya no kikra may be translated as "the sun's power is making me hot". Finally the mineya fish is white, a colour that describes the appearance of immortal, spiritual beings or forces and which stands in dialectical opposition to black and the forces of "blackness".

It is highly significant then that once the bride and groom have consumed "white powers" in the form of cooked fish (whose meat is also white) and sago (the source of white semen), they remove the dog's tooth amulet from their baby fingers (kiangei). The general association between the removal of teeth and babies/procreation is nicely summarized by Lévi-Strauss (1981:175) who writes,

> ... teeth, being a negative expression of the periodicity governing human life are also an inversion of the foetus, which through its separability from the body, of which it seems to be a part, testifies to the same periodicity but this time in a positive fashion,

since it ensures the continuation of the species.

"Why dog's teeth?" is an issue that will become much clearer in Chapter 6. For now, three observations will suffice to indicate their general relevance to the present discussion. First dog's teeth are white with the consistency and durability of bone, properties that invariably describe immortality, spiritual powers, and aspects of female gender. Second, dog's teeth in the form of necklaces are always inherited from the mother or the mother's father. Third, dog teeth necklaces are an important gift included in the brideprice. In fact, hard, white, durable items such as shells and teeth, describe one category of brideprice gift. The other categories include white sago and bananas as well as raw, red pork.

Now we know that linguistically the brideprice or pule is closely tied to notions of totemic rebirth. Specifically, and in view of the rites considered so far, the issue concerns the renewal of "birdness". Again, language supports this interpretation. The word pule consists of the more elementary units pu and le: pu is the root of puen or "corpse" while le is a suffix indicating "bird status". Culturally, the renewal of "birdness" at the level of pule exchange is, first of all, a theme expressed in terms of colour categories and secondly a symbolic implication of the more general categories of marriage gifts. No further analysis is required to support the argument that the colours red and white convey the ideas of transition and continuity, especially when they are opposed to their dialectical opposite, black, the "colour of death". However, the categories of marriage gifts require further comment in order to establish their relevance to this theme and their more general meaning.

There is no question that pork is a cateogry of meat. Equally persuasive is the idea that shells and teeth are categories of "bone". Indeed, the Aekyom describe hard substances that are part of living things (tei) as "bone" (kro). For example, the hard seeds of the pandanus fruit (ko) are called kokro. Together, the categories of meat (saio) and bone (kro) define the constitution of living things (tei). As complementary opposites, they also define the conditions of human

existence. Bone, for example, is the durable or immortal substance that exists after the death of a human being whose flesh either rots away or is consumed by humans or other animals. Significantly, living humans are classified as tei on the basis of their status as a category of meat. Thus human beings differ from, say, birds, in terms of the linguistic identification of flesh or meat categories: humans are wíkè saio while birds are smele saio. At the same time, the spiritual worlds of humans and birds are closely identified with bone or its properties. Given that meat and birds are metaphors for "maleness" which at the level of social organization translates into agnation, I would suggest that the gift of pule as an expression of the "renewal of birdness" refers to the reproduction of agnatic relations which is structured on the basis of the following analogy:

meat : bones :: mortal : immortal :: human : spirit :: male : female

At this juncture, there are two important observations that may be addressed concerning the exchange of pule and its counter prestation. First, while the transaction of marriage gifts adheres to a principle of balanced reciprocity, the exchange is usually balanced in favour of the bride and her kin. Thus, despite the religious implications of balanced reciprocity for the equality of spiritual statuses, it seems as if the bride and her kin are "a little more equal" than the groom and his kin. Secondly, this theme is re-expressed in the kwiakwiamen dance that punctuates the reciprocal exchange. Again it is the bride's kin that dance first and set the tone as it were for the constraints on marriage. Yet, given a concern with the reproduction of agnatic relations and the religous atmosphere of the dance, it is striking that the groom's father, or ai, the principal focus for concepts of agnation, is not involved in these proceedings. Why this should be so may be inferred from the religious tenor of kwiakwiamen.

As suggested earlier, the imagery of war with its ritualized antagonism and displays which, significantly enough, draw on the symbolism of birds of paradise and the cassowary, provides the appropriate metaphor for the transmission, acquisition and transformtion

of supernatural powers (cf. Goldman, 1975). The central theme in the marriage rites is the "renewal of birdness". Put more accurately, the original source of "birdness" is being circulated among specified ritual categories. As a religious event, this process presupposes categories of equal spiritual status. Clearly, the relationship of agnation between father and child — i.e., father and son — neither circumscribes the renewal process nor lends itself to the definition of symmetrical spiritual statuses in kwiakwiamen. Rather, the appropriate, symmetrical spiritual statuses are assumed by the WMB or amban and the groom's kiguam (FeB) or angei (Be). While the latter two relatives are the groom's agnates, their religious significance for kwiakwiamen rests on the basis of their age status: they are the first born representatives of the agnatic line who also belong to alternate terminological levels.

This distinction of "first born" parallels the emphasis of the marriage rites as a whole on first marriage and the original or first transaction of spiritual powers which are circulated throughout the kinshp system. Insofar as kiguam and angei represent "first" ritual categories, they must reflect the qualities of amban with whom they stand in ritual, and by implication, dialectical opposition during kwiakwiamen. I have already suggested that, linguistically, amban may be identified as a transitional category and with the female gender. These distinctions are consistent with amban's ritual role in kwiakwiamen and his status as kinsman of the bride or as the bride's matrilateral relative. It would appear then that gender ambiguity or a bilateral principle underpins the original source of "birdness" and its circulation as a supernatural power among Aekyom relationship categories. Paradoxically, the very articulation of agnatic relationship within a wider context of descent depends on a spiritual process that undermines it. Put in a slightly different way, the key agnatic relation which is the object of the "renewal of birdness", namely and nominally that between father (ai) and son(tia), is not integral to its own reproduction as a spiritually-based phenomenon. It is, rather, a by-product of a more fundamental set of relations which elsewhere I have identified with marriage, cross sex siblingship and the relation beween cross cousins. It is a reasonable expectation,

therefore, that gender ambiguity or bilaterality and the spiritual reproduction of agnation be enacted in the closing stages of the marriage rites.

If we assume a certain level of integration among the materials, events and images of the marriage rites as a whole, then we can reasonably expect the ritual treatment of the bush turkey (dianai) during the final phases of the marriage rites to incorproate and build on the ritual oppositions that structure previous phases. For the sake of easy reference, these oppositions may be listed together as follows:

male	—	female
mortal	—	immortal
human	—	spirit
above	—	below
bird	—	fish
feathered	—	featherless
wings	—	tail

From the moment the groom begins to build the irine (hunting blind) that will separate him from his quarry, the following proposition immediately comes to mind: ritual acts that focus on the bush turkey and/or the properties of the bush turkey serve to mediate the ritual oppositions listed above and, therefore, symbolically complete the cycle of renewal and establish a spiritually-based "bird" identity.

Clearly, the building of the irine reintroduces or reinforces a male-female opposition and establishes the binary opposition,

male : female :: groom (hunter/warrior) : bush turkey (prey/victim).

Yet, the groom must cross this barrier, as it were, in order to shoot the bush turkey. To prepare for this encounter, the groom retires to the house where he sleeps overnight. I suggest that sleeping in general and dreaming[83] in particular provide the spiritual setting and experience which is crucial to the ritual definitiation of the groom's status and the "acceptability" of his role in the process of renewal (cf. Goldman,

1975:22). The shooting of the bush turkey the next day, therefore, reflects both the masculine process of killing and a sexual "death" which constitutes a preliminary to rebirth. The nature of this rebirth in turn is central to Aekyom conceptions of renewal and its implications for the social issues of agnation and descent. True to Aekyom standards of concreteness, the bush turkey provides an appropriate image in this context which draws together or synthesizes the dialectical ritual oppositions that structure the marriage rites. As a result, the bush turkey and its ritual manipulation provide a concrete expression of the relation between agnation and descent which symbolizes "birdness" and its renewal. This relation is, above all else, marked by ambiguity.

Although the bush turkey is classified as a bird (smele) it is unlike most other birds in two important respects. First, it reproduces on the ground below, rather than in the trees above, where it builds a large nest that resembles a rubbish heap. Secondly, although it posesses wings (p'i) like other birds and is capable of flight (but not sustained flight), the bush turkey prefers to walk on the ground and, therefore, uses its legs as the main means of locomotion. This is an important point, since both ritual and myth draw particular attention to the legs of the bush turkey. In the marriage rites, for example, the legs of the bush turkey are tied to its neck. Given the symbolic significance of the neck as a point of articulation between the head above and the body below,[84] the legs in general suggest a transitional category. This is confirmed by Aekyom mythology, which relates how the bush turkey got its yellow legs. Either the goura pigeon (also a ground bird of similar status) or the first man, Wi, painted the bush turkey's legs with the juice of the sapei pandanus fruit. This acquisition of a "second skin" implies the spiritual power of renewal.[85] More importantly, the legs demarcate the bush turkey as a special category relative to birds and fish.

Birds and fish may be distinguished from one another on the basis of vertical differentiation (above - below) which implies a gender opposition (male - female). The correlation of these oppositions is then re-expressed at the level of body parts. Birds are noted for the possession

of wings, which give them the power of flight and elevation. While fish lack wings, they are noted for their tails (gosume) which allow them to swim under the water below. Now birds, of course, also possess tails: but the opposition between wings and tail parallels those at the level of spatial and gender differentiation.[86] Significantly, the bush turkey synthesizes these oppositions, since it is a "flightless" but winged bird whose "heavy" tail confines it to the ground below where it reproduces itself (as a species). Bearing in mind that the verb takei, "to walk around", is a common Aekyom metaphor for reproduction, growth and vertical stature, the legs of the bush turkey highlight not only its ambiguous status in the system of ritual (and mythical) oppositions, but also relationships of continuity and discontinuity with birds and fish, respectively. For most birds which rely on their wings "to walk around", the legs are vestigial. Lacking legs, fish use their tails "to walk around". But that is not all. Fish are in a very real sense antithetical to legs. According to my informants, filariasis of the legs, or tume dimra, which retards walking is caused by a mud fish called tume whose power "catches you in the leg". Significantly mineya is also recognized by the Aekyom to be a type of mudfish.

It may be concluded with some confidence that the themes of ambiguity, continuity and discontinuity which characterize the reproduction of "birdness" are focussed on the image of the bush turkey. Not surprisingly, then, all three themes re-appear as the marriage rites draw to a close. The theme of discontinuity is re-expressed in action when the bride receives the bush turkey with tongs rather than her hands and then puts it in the string bag (gwae hiyenu, or "large string bag"). The separation of the bride from the feathered bush turkey in this context parallels the groom's placement of the bird's wing feathers (or sections of them) in the aela sukmen gwae, a string bag that must be kept at a considerable distance from the bride/wife, especially in the context of cooking. Consistently, the "rebirth" of the bush turkey symbolized by its removal from the string bag, the removal of its feathers and the cooking of its meat reunites male and female elements. The meat is cooked by the bride, a cultural process, then shared between bride and groom and with

the wider hamlet membership. This, I think, symbolizes, reaffirms and celebrates the reproduction of male collectivities or "birdness". However, this process is based on the reciprocal exchange and transformation of the original sources of creation which, in the form of supernatural powers, are transmitted and acquired between spiritually equivalent but socially different statuses. This ambiguity is suggested not only by the ritual status of the bush turkey with which the rites conclude but also by the image of the bird of paradise in terms of which the rites began. Given this connection, it is striking that in another tale about the origin of birds of paradise three daughters of an old man who lives high on a mountain top are transformed into birds of paradise called Uyen, Siarlei and Wo. The myth goes on to explain, however, that Wo was more like a bush turkey who lives an "obscure" existence that parallels the "mysterious" existence of their brother, named Grim. It would appear far from arbitrary, then, that the generic term for bird of paradise, worin consists of the segments wo and ri. Aekyom mythology also discusses two other apparently dissimilar but related "facts". As stated earlier, mythology assigns the origin of bird of paradise (worin) to the tranformational properties or powers of fire which, significantly enough, spread through the hollow of the tei tree. On the other hand, Aekyom myth also states that the bush turkey (dianai) is a transformation of a woman's buttocks (pu). Seemingly disconnected, these origins (and the powers they presuppose) have a direct and mutually significant bearing on the linguistic forms assumed by collectivities in Aekyom society.

The first and most general collectivities are called tei. All Aekyom relate to tei at the levels of first/totemic ancestors and the classification of life forms. As a result, tei is an ambiguous category in Aekyom thought in at least two senses: (i) as transformations of totemic beings, they entail both human and animal or plant status; and (ii) as categories of meat (saio), they suggest life forms in their natural or raw state (see below). Now the reduction of tei ambiguity is achieved, over time, in terms of its linguistic and social differentiation at the level of the tongesu. As descendants of tei, tongesu are distinguished from one another on the basis of a name and agnatic kinship, or on the basis of

cultural as opposed to natural criteria. These observations, therefore, suggest the following binary opposition:

tei : tongesu :: nature : culture

This analogy draws attention to the pivotal position of tei in the Aekyom system of classifications and its relationship to the cultural definition of tongesu membership. Tei is "pivotal" for two reasons. First, tei is a representation of all life forms: humans, animals, birds, fish, insects and plants all belong to tei. Secondly, tei is the mythological focus for the transformation of life forms into other life forms: specifically, totemic beings into human groups. Significantly, this process involves the tranformation of "meat" categories or "raw meat", since in Aekyom society meat is a metaphor for agnation. Building on Lévi-Strauss's (1963) idea of the "culinary triangle", it follows that cooking, as a cultural elaboration of the raw, is integral to a cultural definition of tongesu membership. This conclusion is supported by the Aekyom practice of "cooking" otherwise "raw" successors into the tongesu during male initiation rites. Indeed, it will be recalled that one denotes both the universe of raw meat and uninitiated boys, while one duwene means "cooked one". That this is also thought of as a birth into the tongesu is suggested by the word duwene whose root, duwe, means "to give birth".

Having established these points, we may refine the previous analogy by suggesting a more specific interpretation for the categories "nature" and "culture"; i.e.,

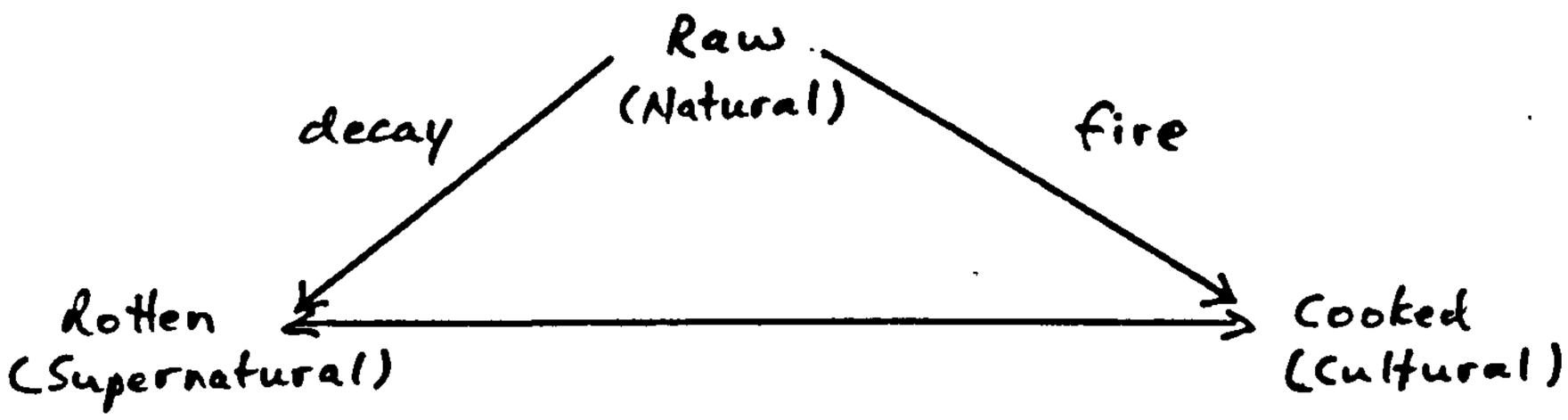
tei : tongesu :: raw : cooked

As a formula for group identity, these analogies are initially attractive because of the parallels that may be drawn with more general definitions of "totemism" and the "culinary triangle". The pattern of homology described by Lévi-Strauss (1963) for totemic societies incorporates a basis opposition between nature ("raw") and culture ("cooked"). Since this opposition re-appears in the formulation of the "culinary triangle" (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, 1978), it would seem to delimit a common structure underlying the form and meaning of specific cultural configurations. However, linguistic and ritual evidence indicate that a nature-culture opposition may not always completely describe the underlying structure of

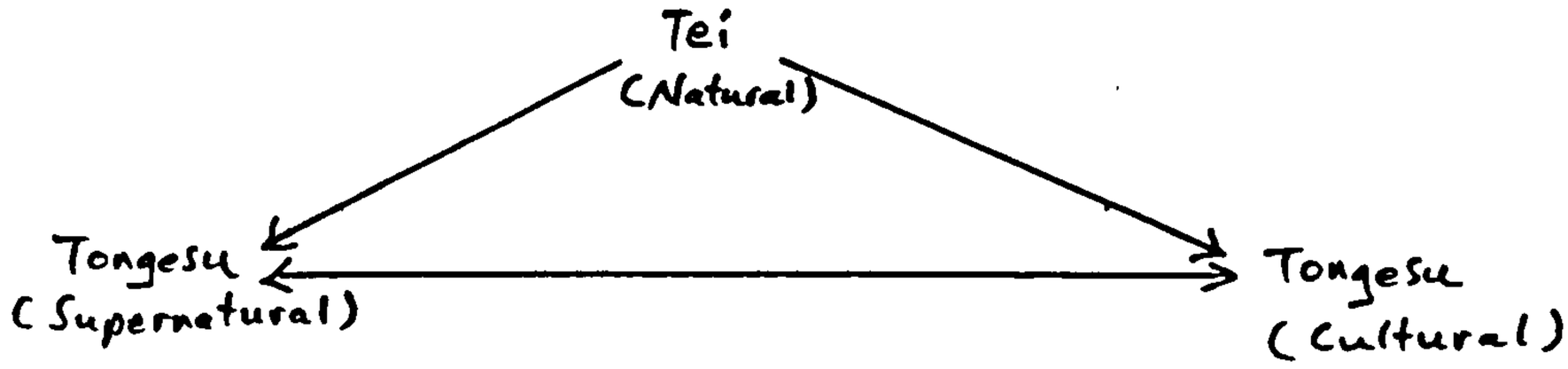
socio-cultural entities.

The difficulty in directly applying Lévi-Strauss' general model to the Aekyom case is that it underemphasizes the religious outlook of a people. Aekyom perspectives on the supernatural, for example, are repeated and elaborated in both gastronomic and totemic spheres. Thus, while Lévi-Strauss (1966:588) sees the category of the "rotten" as a natural transformation of the raw, the Aekyom view the former as a supernatural transformation of the latter.

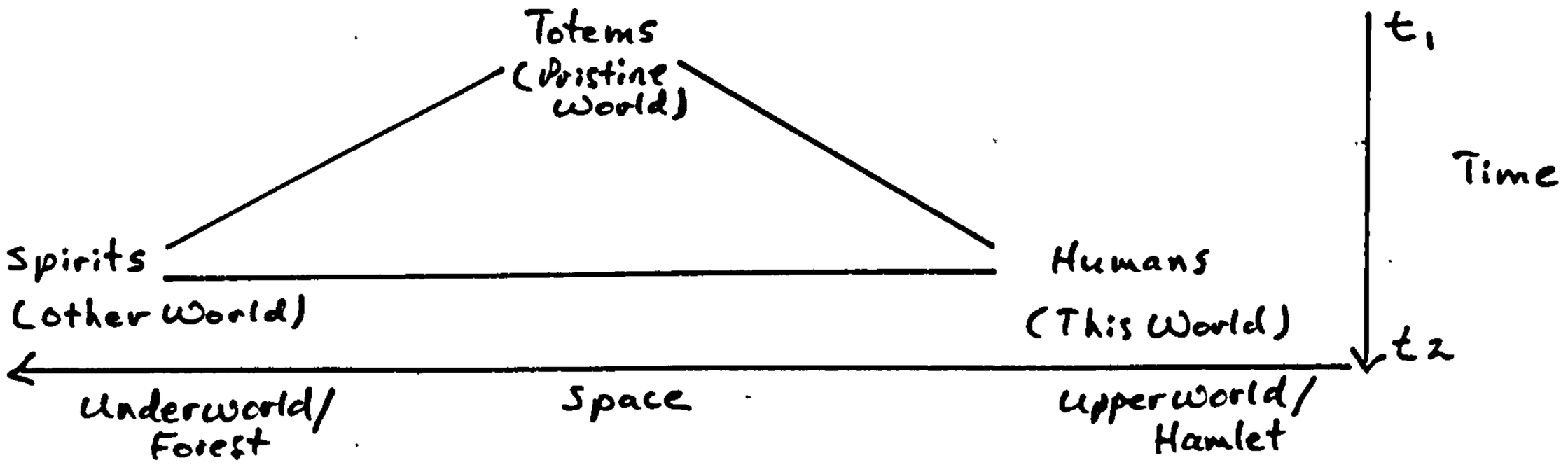
The key process, decay (domkina), is invariably related to supernatural intervention or properties. For example, decay is a model of and for sorcery attack: decaying substances (e.g., taro) are manipulated by the sorcerer in order to induce a similar process of decay (e.g., dysentry, giardia) in his victim. Similarly, as old people decay (e.g., when the skin becomes loose and wrinkled) their supernatural powers are likely to increase. For the Aekyom, then, the "culinary triangle" assumes the following dimensions and processes/elements:



Given the metaphorical identity between meat and social groups, it should follow that the latter may be understood in terms of "culinary" concepts. Significantly, the linguistic character of tongesu supports this proposition. To reiterate, tongesu may be broken down into the linguistic segments tonge and su. As a word, tonge denotes stones used to make fire; as the root of ditonge, it refers to the anus. Bearing in mind the fact that the Aekyom associate the anus with excrement (a category of the rotten) and decay, while stones are used to produce cooking fire and, therefore, cooked products, we may reasonably superimpose a "social triangle" on the "culinary triangle:



The bifurcation of the tongesu into cultural and supernatural categories here highlights the meaning of the suffix su as a linguistic element of tongesu, and draws attention to the position of the tongesu in the Aekyom cosmos. As a linguistic unit, su denotes the trunk or base of a tree which mediates the extension of the tree in space: below the ground (i.e., the roots, dei dulei) or into the sky (i.e., the branches, dei gia, or tu). Su also refers to action sequences in time: specifically, su refers to an action completed in anticipation of an action in the future. If we consider the processes by which tei are tranformed into tongesu together with their spatial and temporal coordinates, we may construct the following "triangle of cosmic beings" whose properties parallel those of the "culinary" and "social triangles".



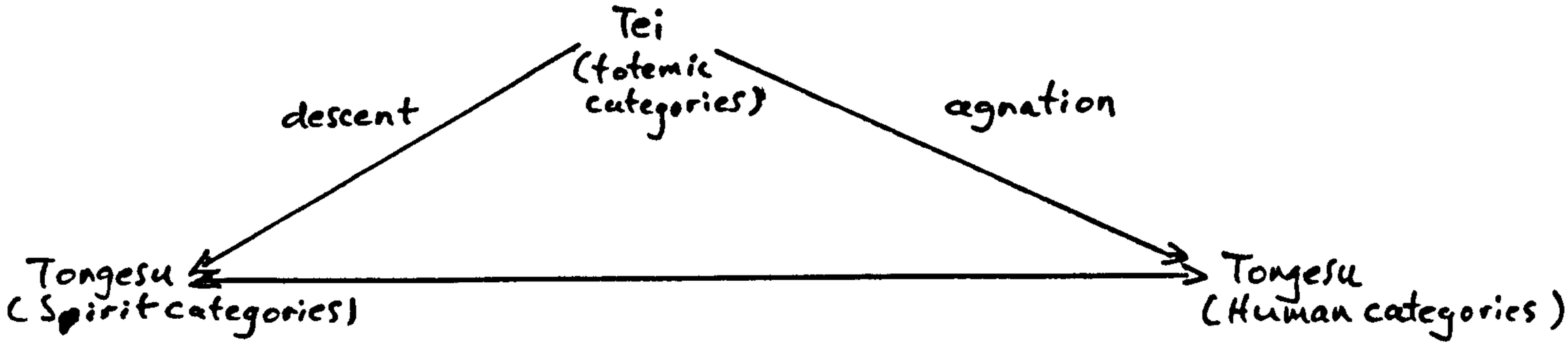
Spirits are the transforms of decay; specifically, the decay of humans whose wrinkled skin is shed in preparation for transition into the spirit world. Conversely, spirits re-emerge with new skins into the human world via the transmission and acquisition of spiritual powers (such as heat) in the context of male initiation, marriage, sexuality and reproduction. Thus, action sequences, processes or cycles that characterize the spirit

world are the reverse of those that characterize the human world. This may be illustrated by a comparison of their respective "life cycles":

	Spirits	Humans
Cycle	death → life → rebirth	birth → life → death

Significantly, the temporal opposition between humans and spirits suggested by the reversal of their respective life cycles is paralleled by their oppositional relationships to space as collectivities. On the one hand, the human collectivity is discrete or discontinuous in space, Hamlets, for example, divide agnatic groups and create a heterogeneous Aekyom community. Furthermore, the agnatic line (F-S relation) is discontinuous in time: as demonstrated by the rites of marriage, it is not central to its own reproduction. On the other hand, the spiritual collectivity is continuous across space and time. Spirits reside not only below the ground, in the underworld, but also above the ground, primarily in the forest (rine) but also venturing into the human community where their presence may be either beneficial or detrimental to the welfare of its members. More importantly, spirits or their attributes restore to the human collectivity the original sources of creation which complement, within the cycle of life and death, their power to kill.

Insofar as the tongesu involves a kinship concept, we may represent these ideas in the form of a "triangle of kinship categories" which builds on the space-time properties of previous "triangles".



The implications of this diagram for the structure and meaning of the marriage rites seems clear: the exchange of pule is about descent or the reproduction of "birdness", reflected in the ritual manipulation of the

bush turkey and ri bird of paradise, which is integral to but not synonymous with the reproduction of agnatic lineality. The latter, as a kinship category in time and space, stands in dialectical opposition to descent, a conclusion that follows from the transformational relations of inversion that exists between the spiritual and human aspects of the tongesu. Put a slightly different way, religious qualities organize kinship structures into a system of dialectical oppositions which are integrated at natural, cultural and supernatural levels. Thus, it is in this context that the totemic or ambiguous features of the relationship terminology begin to make sense, and Aekyom marriage practices assume a function and meaning. However, before these issues are drawn together in a more systemic fashion, there is a small problem raised at the beginning of this chapter that must be addressed. Like other group configurations in the Ok Tedi Area, the Aekyom tongesu is not only a kinship construct but also a nominal group. This is an important distinction, since names reflect both discontinuous and continuous properties of the tongesu. For example, names introduce discontinuities in space insofar as they identify hamlet-owning agnatic groups. At the same time, names are an expression of temporal continuity since they represent the group's inheritance from an ancestral, totemic beginning. What bearing names and naming have on these wider issues of classification, kinship and marriage is a question that provides the focus for discussion in the next chapter.

Summary

A review of comparative ethnography from the Ok Tedi Area reveals both uniformity and diversity in kinship forms and descent categories. However, the difficulties encountered in attempts to reconcile alternative concepts of kinship and descent with shared cultural idioms leads to an ethnographic focus on the significance of names for group definitions and membership. The articulation of social categories in this context begins with an examination of the Aekyom social classification. Formal analysis of the relationship terminology demonstrates a fundamental structural ambiguity which is described by asymmetrical and symmetrical properties. The formal inconsistencies in the relationship terminology draw attention to the place of cross sex sibling and cross cousin relationships in the terminology as a whole and their relevance for concepts of lineality, affinity and the broader issue of evolutionary or structural change in social classifications. A formal understanding of the terminology is then supplemented by a discussion of terminological usage and the linguistic and cultural content of specific relationship terms. It is argued that their meanings are based on a set of comprehensive metaphors, semantic features and social attitudes reflecting a form of kinship reckoning that is firmly grounded in themes of renewal and rebirth. These and related themes are elaborated and repeated in a series of binary oppositions defined by kinship, gender, totemic, cosmic, religious, cultural and natural criteria and structured on the basis of an underlying dialectical logic. These principles of order are then shown to be reflected in mythological and other collective representations that inform the structure and content of the social classification.

The formal, social and religious aspects of the relationship terminology are then brought to bear on a consideration of Aekyom marriage practices and rituals. A review of the historical record relates distinct patterns of marriage to the formal properties and inconsistencies of the relationship terminology. Observations on symmetrical and asymmetrical forms of marriage draw attention to both the non-repetitive character of restricted exchange and the normative and statistical

prominence of generalized exchange. From a sociological perspective, these marriage forms are related to the demographic and political constraints of pre- and post-contact hamlet life and their implications for alliance relationships. However, when viewed in a religious context, they play complementary roles in the consolidation and differentiation of spiritual and cultural qualities. This argument prompts a description and analysis of Aekyom marriage rites which, it is argued, pursue a recurrent religious logic in the reproduction of nominal groups and categories. The rituals highlight both the representation of primordial conditions as integral to the acquisition, transmission and transformation of supernatural, creative forces and the cultural differentiation of male/agnatic groups or "birdness" which is their effect. The implications of this argument are then brought to bear on the linguistic and symbolic forms which nominal collectivities assume in Aekyom society. Beginning with Lévi-Strauss' idea of the "culinary triangle", the categories of nature and culture are redefined within a religious context. As a result, variations of a "culinary triangle" in Aekyom society are presented as a definition of group structure along kinship, totemic, cosmic, cultural and spiritual dimensions.

CHAPTER 5. NAMES AND NAMING: NOMINAL CATEGORIES AND THE PROBLEM OF DESCENT

Introduction

This chapter provides an ethnographic discussion on a topic that is largely neglected in New Guinea studies: names and naming. For the Aekyom, nomination is relevant to a wide range of social, political, legal and religious issues which are neither trivial nor inconsequential to their condition and way of life. Therefore, a study of Aekyom names and naming opens promising channels for the analysis of Aekyom society and culture.

The wider significance of names and naming for culture areas in New Guinea was clearly recognized by Bateson, who, in an appraisal of the Iatmul case, wrote:

> The naming system is indeed a theoretical image of the whole culture and in it every formulated aspect of the culture is reflected (Bateson, 1958:228).

It is testimony to Bateson's remarkable insight that his conclusion (and ethnography) not only has general currency in the Aekyom situation but remains instructive in discussions of current theoretical and methodological issues.

In the analysis of names, Lévi-Strauss (1966) has argued that names are a function of classification. Put more technically, personal names, for example, seem to be manifestations of a more general logic that ensures the structural compatability of certain personal names with others of the same type. When this same logic is applied at the level of group names, nomination is subsumed by a more comprehensive conceptual model. Thus, for some totemic societies, nominal differentiation among social groups (e.g., clans, communities) is argued to be homologous with the diversity of natural species. However, the Iatmul data seem to invert this

proposition since classification flows from differences in culturally constituted names as opposed to a nature-culture homology. As Forge (1972:531) notes, differentiation proceeds according to the names assigned by clans to a natural species which may also serve as a common totem for various groups. The sharing of totemic ancestors (as natural species) by different named clans then seems to reflect a fundamental similiarity or cosmological unity among them. Indeed, except for their nominal differences, clans appear to be identical to one another.

The priority of names for group definitions and differentiation is not an observation unique to Iatmul and some other Sepik cultures (Forge, 1971, 1972; Gewertz, 1977). In the Ok Tedi Area it is often the case that "clans" or social groups are "first and foremost" name groups. Given the wider context of descent which informs the application of names to totemic ancestors and their descendants, it is striking that the significance of nomination vis-à-vis descent has been poorly articulated for New Guinea societies. This situation raises an obvious question: if names are not substitutes for descent (cf. Lindstrom, 1985) then what is the mechanism of their union? Again, the Iatmul enthography offers some clues towards the solution of this problem.

Bateson (1932, 1958) shows that among the Iatmul, names are integral to various institutions and relationships such as property ownership, sacred narrative, kinship and spiritual ties. These findings suggest that while names have classificatory value they also participate in more general patterns of sociation that have important social, religious, legal and other consequences. Significantly, this theme is a recurrent feature of global ethnography. For example, Barnes (1980) demonstrates that Hidatsa personal names are central to public definitions of community structure and history. Aspects of this theme reappear among the Northern Yuman, where personal names presuppose or allude to historical narratives and, therefore, constitute "abbreviated texts" (Kendall, 1980). In similar contexts, names have an important bearing on concepts and practice of title and ownership insofar as they recapitulate the settlement histories of the ancestral founders of land and/or property

and, therefore, legitimize contemporary claims to it (Goldman, 1975; Sal mond, 1982). Where concepts of names are distinct from their bearers, they may provide an exclusive mode of recruitment to, membership in and reproduction of social groups (Lindstrom, 1985; cf. Goldman, 1975). Within more narrow limits, names and naming may pinpoint crucial social relationships in a society and their role in the creation of social categories (Bamberger, 1974; Verswijver, 1983) or transform social categories for the purpose of identification with groups (Tooker, 1984). Thus, names may describe social biographies, express social situations and the constraints on interaction, or may even be used in ways that parallel the use of "kinship" terms (Barnes, 1980; Beidelman, 1974; Kendall, 1980; Strathern, 1970). In concert with "kin" terminologies, names may express fundamental dialectical principles of social organization or mask contradictions that arise from the interplay of kinship and marriage, thereby sustaining the social integrity or political coherence of groups and communities (Benjamin, 1968; Kaplan, 1975). The dialectical environment of nomination may also be expressed through ritual which, among the Eastern Bororo of Brazil, emphasizes the indissoluble link between natural, cultural and supernatural categories (Crocker, 1983). Here names are closely associated with totemic representations that serve to reinforce the system of descent. This is accomplished through totemic rituals that require the impersonations of totemic figures belonging to groups that stand in dialectical oppostion to those of the impersonators. As a result, "totemic essences" which recreate or reify nominal beings (e.g., individual Bororo) are exchanged between moieties under conditions of ritual inversion and transformation of clan and moiety identities. While this implies ambiguity in the transmission and acquisition of names, the spiritual powers generated are crucial to the perpetuation of distinct clans belonging to opposite moieties. The metaphorical character and cosmic imagery embedded in Bororo names is paralleld by the Kwakuitl of the Canadian Northwest Pacific Coast. Here, names and naming integrate the human and spirit/ancestral worlds in order to secure a continuous circulation of life forms within the community. While the emphasis in this context appears to be on the lineage, it is striking that the dual character of descent is

forged within an arena of ritual antagonisms, dialectical oppositions and transformations of power (Goldman, 1975).

These data seem sufficient to draw attention to certain theoretical and methological issues that must be addressed in an ethnographic study of nomination. It is, as Barnes (1980) implies, inadequate to concentrate solely on the problem of classification or the formal/logical structure of names. Classification must be brought into harmony with the social and religious contexts in which the function and meaning of names emerge and naming patterns or practices take shape. This requires an examination of the inter-relational qualities of names within the human community and between the human and spirit worlds — or, more generally, the cosmos. Therefore, my task is to examine the relationship of Aekyom names to language and classification and to clarify their naming patterns and practices. Specifically, this will involve a description and analysis of:

(i) the terms for and presentation of names;

(ii) the types of names, including personal, group, teknonyms, "toponyms";

(iii) the content of names with respect to their reference and distribution; and

(iv) the constraints on access, transmission, acquisition and use of names.

In concluding the chapter, I will try to show what bearing the system of nominal categories has on kinship, marriage and the broader issue of descent.

Linguistic Aspects of Nomination: Language and Classifcation

The Aekyom term for "name" is hi. As a linguistic category, hi is used in phrases that request information on the personal names of individuals and some animals as well as the names of groups, territories, cosmic space and some artifacts. Thus, the questions gwa hi ko dite —

"What is your name?", or gwa psaene, ya hi ko dite – "What is your dog's name?", are intended to elicit a response describing a personal name: e.g., na hi ko Kaem – "My name is Kaem." A similar formula is used to describe other nominal categories that, for example, locate people in space or assign them to groups. As the most general nominal categories, I shall discuss first those names that identify people in space and with groups (tongesu). This is followed by an examination of personal names and teknonyms which highlights naming patterns, practices and the constraints on name usage.

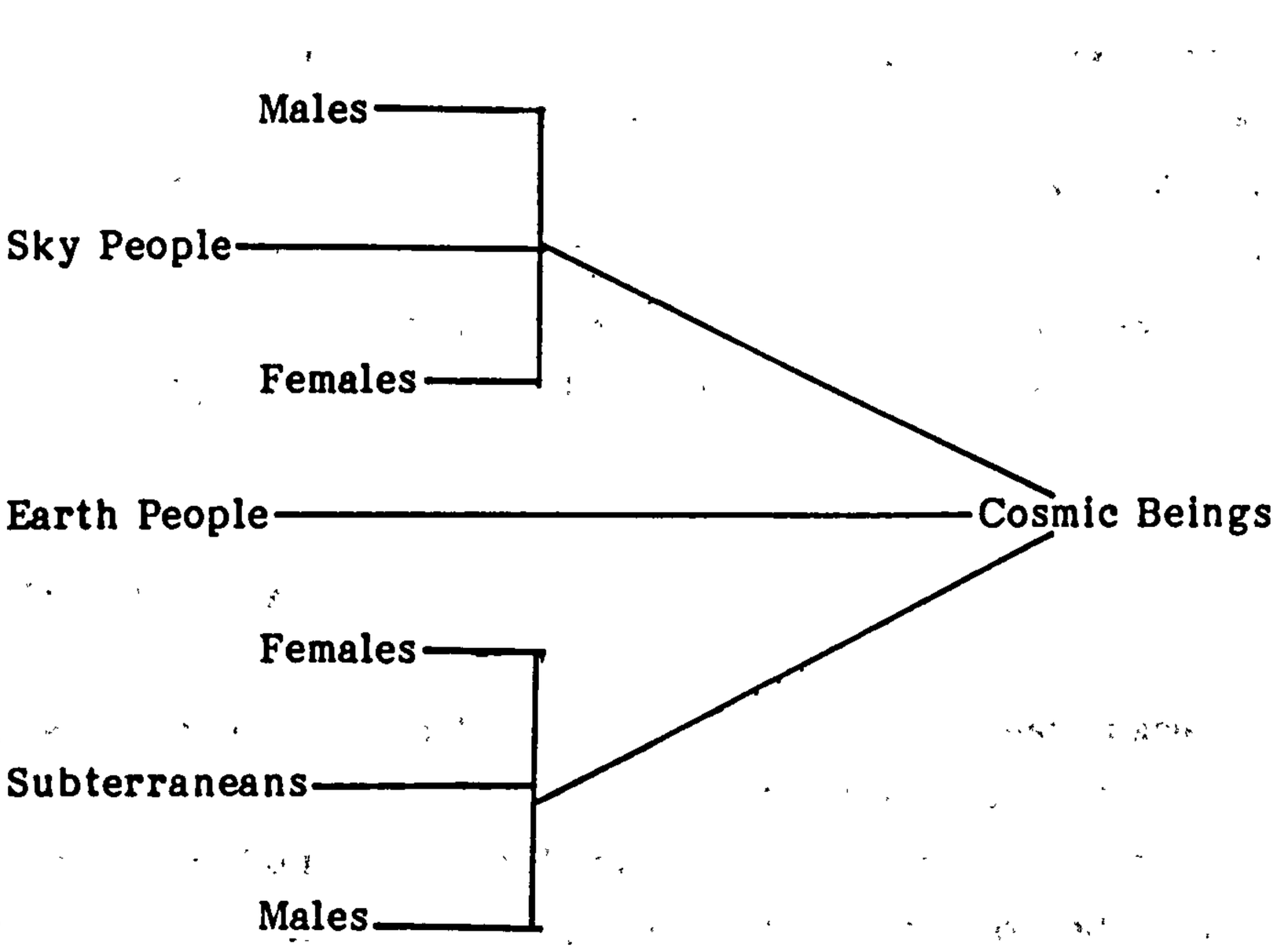
Nominal Groups and Space

The most comprehensive set of names for humans identifies them on the basis of their geographical location. Here geographical categories qualify the identities of people (wḱè) and consist of simple or compound words that comprise either simple unsegmentable lexemes or composite segmentable ones. Thus "mountain people" such as the Min are called variably aenggu wḱè, tuwenknu or waitunai ("People of the river headwaters"), which distinguish them, linguistically, from "people of the lowlands", known as penenknu or wai pen wḱè ("people of the river mouth"). People in either of these nominal categories are further characterized on the basis of settlement. Aeklim wḱè are people who inhabit the deeper reaches of the forest (e.g., traditional hamlets) in contrast to people who occupy government-inspired villages, namely hanua wḱè. Significantly, there is not, to my knowledge, any linguistic opposition that relates the category of the "bush" (dei dulei) to traditional hamlets on the basis of a nature-culture distinction. While hamlet territories and houses-as-domestic land marks are given names which situate them in social and physical space there appears to be no categorical tendency to relate "domestic landmarks" as a whole in opposition to categories of the "wild".[1]

In addition to geographically-informed nominal categories, Aekyom names locate groups or collectivities in cosmic space. The cosmos is divided into three named levels, each inhabited by beings who share the

same languages and customs.[2] The first or highest level accommodates the "sky people" known as sni or kwikom wḱè. The second or middle level is occupied by Aekyom (and other groups such as the Min, Yonggom, Ningerum and Pare) "here on earth" (to). The third or lower level includes the subterraneans called to kuprum wḱè. Both males and females occupy each cosmic level. However, the celestial and underground worlds are also characterized by vertical distinctions among males and females which are the mirror image of one another. Thus the empyrean realm is occupied by males who are also located in the abyss. These distinctions and the general features of the Aekyom cosmos are represented in Diagram 5.

Diagram 5.
The Aekyom Cosmos



What do we learn from Aekyom cosmology? First, as on earth, males and females in the upper and lower worlds are differentiated on the basis of vertical distinctions. In this context, these two worlds are identical across a transformation of inversion, a relationship that also holds between the human and spiritual or mortal and immortal aspects of the tongesu. Expressed totemically, sky people share a cosmic realm with birds (smele) while subterraneans include fish (bun). To complete the equation, the bush turkey (dianai) occupies the middle world. Secondly, these distinctions, it will be recalled, are re-presented in the rituals of marriage, where the concern is with the reproduction of "birdness" or the tongesu. Bearing in mind the binary opposition,

male : female :: above : below

there appears to be a close connection between agnation and birds, and matrilaterality or affinity and fish. These associations in turn parallel the bifurcation of the tongesu into human and spiritual dimensions. Given the spatial and temporal structures described for the marriage rites, the cosmic implication here is that quite distinct but dialectically opposed cosmic beings must be brought together in the context of antagonistic ritual in order to reproduce or recreate a somewhat ambiguous but named tongesu "here on earth". This metaphorical and cosmological union in the re-creation of a nominal entity is not unlike that encountered among the Eastern Bororo who, in the context of "totemic" representations, say "The Exerae [moiety] are Tugarege [moiety], and the Tugarege, Exerae" (Croker, 1983:175).

The Tongesu as Nominal Group

At birth, each male or female is assigned the tongesu name of his/her father and this name will be retained by the individual as a member of a group throughout his/her life. The only exceptions to this practice seem to occur in cases of adoption where the adopted child's tongesu name may be changed to match that of the foster father. But such changes are not necessarily permanent as the adopted child may, over time or at any given point in time, ambiguously assume the tongesu name of the foster father or genitor. Furthermore, my notes indicate that changes of

this order are more likely to occur when two particular conditions are met: first, when the foster father and the adopted child's genitor are mote; and second, when the adopted child is a first born male. Thus, it is at the level of the tongesu name that an individual first claims membership in a group or nominal category.

Membership in a named tongesu has two important implications for the nature of group membership in Aekyom society. On the one hand, members of specific tongesu are identified with particular hamlets either as hamlet owners or hamlet members who recognize close agnatic ties as the basis of tongesu membership. On the other hand, hamlet-focused tongesu members claim identity with members of different hamlets who share the same tongesu name. This nominal association is justified in terms of agnatic kinship, although the links are more distant or simply putative. However, agnatic kinship does not exhaust the range of idioms in terms of which the Aekyom may make a case for nominal affiliations. At the level of myth, for example, the tongesu's agnatic equation is of secondary concern in the formulaic acquisition of names which always involves exchanges between cross cousins or affines (or more generally, mote). As a result, ancestral linkages through names to totemic figures are often ambiguous: different named tongesu identified with local hamlets may share a totem or set of totems, while same-name tongesu members distributed among two or more hamlets may claim different and separate totems. These and other features of Aekyom "totemism" are presented in Table 25 below.

This table calls for further comment since it confirms and summarizes a number of important points made previously in a variety of contexts. While the table demonstrates considerable variety in the distribution of totems, it also draws particular attention to the relationship between the tongesu as a nominal category and its associated totem(s). Significantly, nominal reference does not always correspond to the identity of ancestral totemic figures or species. In this context, it may be seen that Aekyom totemic affiliations draw together or integrate natural (e.g., plants, animals, birds), cultural (e.g., knife, grammatical units) and supernatural (e.g., medicinal substances) categories as well as

Table 25.

Akeyom Totemic Affiliations*

Village	Hamlet Name	Tongesu Name	Nominal Reference	Totem
Drimgas	Graihei	Drim	Verb category indicating sequence of actions	tim tree/fruit knikni (green fig parrot)
	Piduwenai	Gre	?	mine (feral/domestic pig) knikni (green fig parrot)
	Skikokei	Gre	?	unknown
	Duduyene	Gre	?	kbope tree/fruit knikni (green fig parrot)
	Dnitonai	Gasei	gasnai pandanus	swai su ("old people's" sweet potato)
	Trienkokei	Gasei	gasnai pandanus	unknown
	Hutienai	Dua	sio kei dua	sio kei dua (dua pandanus)
	Dupei	Demesuke	bamboo knife	da (sago)
	Mnaembi	Gondok	bark fibre from the gon tree	gon kei (fruit of the gon tree)
	Trienkokei	Somi	som tree	som tree
	Duduyene	Somi	som tree	unknown
	Topu	Ihene	?	kbi kei (fruit of the kbi tree)
	Dnitonai	Bike	?	psen deidulei (tree grub)
	Piduwenai	Mia	?	uya (black palm tree)
Gi (South Awin)	?	Tmin	tmin sago palm	tmin kei (fruit of the tmin sago)
	?	Solei	solei (medicinal plant)	monai (cassowary)
	?	Gi	gi tree	dupei (crocodile)
	?	Holei	?	grene kuprum (cave in Grene Mountain)
Noningiri (North Awin)	?	Siponai	?	monai kei (cassowary eggs)
Runai (North Awin)	?	Solei	solei (medicinal plant)	demele (white cockatoo) Mome (species of fly)
Greingas (West Awin)	?	Gasei	gasnai pandanus	sine (snake)
Drimskai (East Awin)	?	Skai	banana species	mine (feral/domestic pig)
Timingondok	?	Gasei	gasnai pandanus	gasnai pandanus
		Demsuke	bamboo knife	ski bamboo

* Entries identified by a question mark "?" indicate either an untranslated (or untranslatable) lexeme or information not obtained during fieldwork. "Unknown totems" refers to information that my informants were unable to give due to (apparent) insufficnct knowledge.

(implicitly) aspects of social action (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, they highlight a recurrent principle of "identity and difference" which may be applied to the nature of a single tongesu or the relationship between two or more tongesu localized in separate hamlets. At this level, it may also be appreciated that hamlet (territorial) names are closely tied to totemic representations (e.g., Dupei hamlet and the crocodile [dupei] totem of the Gi tongesu) and to the relations between hamlets as socio-religious configurations (see below). It should prove instructive then to examine more closely what hamlet territories mean to the Aekyom in this wider setting.

Hamlet territory names do not, as a set, constitute toponyms, although they may contain toponymic references as categories of language. Each hamlet territory name together with its linguistic character and relevant landmarks or other distinguishing features are reviewed below for the hamlet-owning tongesu associated with Drimgas village.

(i) **Graihei:** This name is rather difficult to interpret. Linguistically, it does not seem to be segmentable into more elementary meaningful units. However, in addition to denoting Drim hamlet territory, Graihei is also the name of an anthropomorphic being or spirit who inhabits an unnamed sago swamp in the interior. This sago "garden" is decidedly taboo-laden, as any attempt to harvest its palms is subject to the wrath of Graihei. According to Drim informants, the transgressor's spirit (wḱè dulei) will be attacked by Graihei, which results in physical (back) pain, headache and fever. Why Graihei should appear as a headless spirit with a toothed collar bone I am quite at a loss to say. This bizarre image may have a connection with the spirits of senior males (kiguam, monai) whose skulls are removed from the skeletons according to traditional mortuary practices. This reading would also be consistent with the spiritual powers of "old men" who have the capacity to cause similar sicknesses in their victims.

(ii) **Piduwenai:** The name Piduwenai has two meanings which seem to bear no relation to one another. As a toponym, Piduwenai describes a hill (topu) that serves as a territorial landmark. As a proper name, it

identifies a supernatural bush boar which, the Aekyom say, lives beneath the hill. A hill and a pig bear no obvious resemblance to each other except to say that they are associated by continguity. Yet there is a relationship between them of a less obvious kind. Hills and pigs, at least mythologically and metaphorically, are closely tied to the symbolism of death, rebirth and continuity. Hills, for example, are loci of "ancestral" emergence that parallel the procreative symbolism of mountains. Cosmically, hills also mediate spatial realms being a feature of the ground below which extends into the sky above. This distinction is confirmed at other levels of symbolism and language. Hills are metaphorically identified with the nest of the bush turkey, a large mound of rotting leaves and vegetable debris that generates the heat of rebirth. It will be recalled that rot, heat, and the bush turkey are all identified with the symbolism of the tongesu and its relationship to the cycle of reproduction. The anus in particular is at the core of a constellation of ideas and metaphors that focus on the emergence of life (i.e., rebirth) from death (i.e., excrement and rot). Language offers a striking confirmation of the place of hills and the bush turkey in this symbolic pattern. Topu or "hill" may be broken down into the segments to which means "ground, earth" and pu, which denotes the buttocks. As already mentioned, the bush turkey is a mythological transformation of a female's buttocks. Bush pigs also build nests (hiowe) of a similar nature. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to argue that Piduwenai hill is the nest of the supernatural pig, Piduwenai. However, mythology also illuminates the status of the bush pig in Aekyom thought by highlighting the relationship between Piduwenai as supernatural bush pig and the eventual successors to Piduwenai as hamlet territory. In a tale about the origin of male initiation, a bush pig appears as an aggressive animal that engages a novice in an antagonistic ritual encounter. The bush pig kills the novice and eats his flesh, leaving only the bones. The novice's father then takes his son's bones to Mt. Fubilan, where they are buried (placed inside the mountain). This signifies the completion of the first initiation and the beginning of all subsequent initiations. Without going into the details of male initiation rites, it would appear that the novices' reproduction as "birds" depends on the recycling of meat (eating, defecation),[3] a metaphor for agnation. This is

accomplished in terms of gastronomic metaphors and related symbols such as teeth, a form a bone. This reproductive theme, in which the wild pig is a central figure, is characterized by considerable ambiguity. Given the equation between eating and sex, and the containment of sexuality in the marriage relationship, it is striking that a married couple's (or couples') residence is called girimen aewe, "house of the wild giri pig". Thus the bush pig cum domestic pig is closely tied to idioms of reproduction and continuity (symbolized by bone) of "bird meat" and in this context assumes a matrilateral or affinal identity. As we have seen, these themes are expressed in the marriage rites which involve the reciprocal exchange of meat (pork) and bone (teeth) and pule (pu = corpse, buttocks; le = "birdness"). There is, therefore, a symbolic or ritual equation of otherwise distinct kinship statuses (agnatic, affinal) for the purposes of reproducing members of a tongesu. Significantly, these ideas are expressed at the level of language which fuses the identity of the bush pig with aspects of "birdness" and rebirth in the name Piduwenai. Linguistically, Piduwenai consists of the segments pi, which means "bird wings",[4] duwe, the verb meaning "to give birth", and nai, an indicator of association (e.g., identity, ownership, etc.).

(iii) **Dnitonai:** This name seems straightforward enough. Dni (or dri) denotes a sand beach claimed by members of the Gasei tongesu as a major landmark of their territory in Aekyom mythology. However, this sand beach has another significant association which links it to the symbolisms of rebirth and the mediation of cosmic realism. Turtles (ambum), which in Aekyom thought are subterraneans since they dwell beneath the water's surface, come to a world above in order to lay their eggs in the sand beach where they will also hatch. As a name, then, the wider meaning of Dnitonai parallels aspects of Piduwenai.

(iv) **Skikokei, Trienkokei:** The common element in these names is kokei, which means "on the bank of". Wai skine, or ski creek is a branch of wai i (i creek), an important tributary of the Fly River, which forms a boundary between several hamlet territories. Similarly, trien creek divides a number of hamlet territories. In Aekyom thought, creeks and

rivers are not only topographical boundaries, but also socio-religious boundaries. This is expressed in Aekyom mythology (see above and Chapter 6) as well as in other hamlet territory names.

(v) **Hutienai:** Topographically, the distinguishing feature of Hutienai is its separation from other hamlet territories such as Graihei by the Fly River, the major waterway among the Fly River Aekyom. Linguistically, Hutienai expresses notions of antagonism, sexuality (i.e., affinity) and supernatural powers which characterize relationships between humans located in separate communities or relationships among beings of a spiritual category. Hu refers to spiritual or supernatural power tha is embedded in such things as magical words or sago powder (both called hu). Tien, on the other hand, is a verb which connotes sexuality and aggression.

(vi) **Dupei:** The themes of sexuality and aggression are also apparent in the name Dupei. Dupei denotes the crocodile, a particularly dangerous and aggressive animal in the Aekyom fauna. More importantly, dupei like ambum (turtle) lives in a "house" beneath the Fly River and comes out either to eat or reproduce (the crocodile lays its eggs in sand beaches or along the river banks). The name Dupei then has an inherent socio-religious meaning. It follows that the hamlet/territory, like the crocodile's "residence" is a socio-religious entity in terms of which cosmic zones must be crossed or mediated in order to carry out life's processes and cycles. It is highly significant, therefore, that sago palms, the most important Aekyom resource circumscribed by hamlet boundaries, were originally (i.e., mythologically) fertilized by the crocodile who passed his semen and excrement into previously infertile and inedible palms.

(vii) **Duduyene:** This name may be broken down into the elementary units dudu and yene. Dudu denotes a variety of bird while yene is the verb meaning "to kill". As my informants put it, a dudu bird was killed at the founding of this hamlet and its territories. No additional argument is required here to support the claim that Duduyene reflects the cosmic imagery of killing and the rebirth of "birdness".

(viii) Topu: This name means "hill" whose symbolic significance has already been discussed.

(ix) Mnaembi: Ths name denotes a creek also called Mnaembi and would seem to share the symbolism outlined for other hamlet territory names that involve references to creeks or rivers.

It is clear from this dicussion that hamlet territory names or significant named landmarks and other distinguishing features are not simply of topographical interest to the Aekyom. As nominal categories they encode and encapsulate a symbolic sense of and reference to group definitions and interrelations that span human and spiritual realms (cf. Barnes, 1980: 325-328). To what extent these themes are repeated and elaborated at the level of personal names is a question taken up in the next section.

Aekyom Personal Names

My inquiry into Aekyom personal names began by asking a simple question : gwa hi ko dite – "What is your name?" To this question the Aekyom invariably respond by telling you their personal name: e.g., na hi ko Dawei – "My name is Dawei." When I became more adept in the use of the Aekyom language, this simple question was put in a somewhat more complex form. Instead of asking gwa hi ko dite, the question became guko di gwate – "Who are you?" This shift in emphasis draws attention to another invariable response pattern regarding Aekyom names. First, informants would give their personal first name. As the discussion proceeded to elicit more information on this question of identity, the name of the individual's tongesu would follow. Finally, I became aware that all Aekyom are assigned a personal second name. While it may not be immediately apparent, this nominal ordering of one's identity has important structural implications for Aekyom concepts of descent and their relationship to agnation. As a result, this theme provides the focus for the following discussion.

Social Constraints on the Use of Personal Names

In most social situations that involve differences in age status or vertical distinctions in terminological level, the use of the personal name of a senior relative or affine is to be avoided. Failure to observe the conventions of name avoidance results in variably breaches of etiquette or disrespect as well as more serious and dangerous transgressions. An especially serious infraction of customary practice is to address or refer to senior matrilateral or affinal relatives by their personal names. According to my informants, it is "stupid" (nononkina) to speak the personal name of the mother's brother (aepua). However, it is decidedly dangerous and "taboo-laden" (koma) to use the personal name of the wife's father (aepua) — who under conditions of an "ideal" marriage is also the mother's brother — in situations of address or reference. Therefore, for members of junior generations or terminological level, relationship terms are used to refer to or address their seniors. In contrast, seniors may and usually do address or refer to their juniors by using the latter's personal first names. Similarly, there are usually no restrictions on the use of personal names between members of the same terminological level. However, there are two notable exceptions to this practice. First, it is rare for siblings-in-law (mote) to use one another's personal names. Secondly, husband and wife usually use the terms ala and knu, respectively, or will employ "pandanus names" in situations of address. This involves calling one another sio, a general term also used to denote varieties of wild pandanus. If they should have living children, they may also use teknonyms. These usually take the following forms: the wife will say, for example, Dawei yai ("Dawei his father") when addressing or referring to her husband, while the husband will use the phrase Dawei yaeme, ("Dawei his mother") when addressing or referring to his wife (Dawei being the hypothetical name of their son).

As a methodological note, it may be added that some of these practices regarding the use of personal names were not followed when references to personal names of some kin and affines were made for the sake of the ethnographer. However, the constraints on the use of

personal names in situations of address were scrupulously obeyed.

Access to Pesonal Names

All personal names are drawn from a pool of names that is specific to Aekyom society.[5] However, this pool is not large. Nor is it divided into separate repositories from which individuals may draw their personal names. As a result, certain names may be widely distributed among many individual members of many different localized tongesu. While personal names are not compartmentalized into specific stocks that are owned separately by individuals or groups, there is a sense in which certain names assume "core" status in contrast to other, "peripheral" names and, therefore, preserve a measure of coherence among descent categories. As will be discussed later, at issue is the perspective from which one views the integrity of descent groups as nominal categories or sets of nominal categories.

Types of Personal Names: Structure, Content and Distribution

Aekyom personal names may comprise either simply, unsegementable lexemes or composite, segmentable ones. In some cases they may include appelations that are structured on the basis of verbal or adjectival stems. However, Aekyom names do not define the attirbutes of the persons who bear them or the basis of, say, his or her personal exploits or contingent events and circumstances (e.g., Barnes, 1980:314, 315, 327; Goldman, 1975:61; Lévi-Strauss, 1966:174-175). Some personal names are sex specific while others may be assumed by either sex. These distinctions seem to be related to the variable content of personal names which as a set, integrate natural, cultural and supernatural categories including natural species, cultural artifacts, medicinal substances, cosmic dimensions, etc.

Table 26 illustrates the structure, content and distribution of Aekyom personal names. While it is not exhaustive for the society as a whole, it does cover the range of name types to be found among the Fly River Aekyom.

Table 26.

Akeyom Personal Names

Male Names	Female Names	Bisexual Names
Kbilei (Papuan hornbill)	Sapei (drum)	Tiepe (wild pandanus)
Demele (White cockatoo)	Sanam (sago garden)	Ku (string)
Dupei (crocodile)	Kriaewe (pied shrike)	Tu (headwaters)
Bun (fish)	Dma (banana)	Wi (leaf)
Piau (Papuan Black Snake)	Swai (sweet potato)	Snaeke (medicinal plant)
Kai (digging stick)	Kawa (wild sago)	Mine (pig)
Bosenai (feather headdress)	Di (red lorry)	
Wone (breadfruit)	Atingai (mushroom)	
Kon (ground spider)	Daso (sago branch)	
Kaem (sweet potato)	Ware (green tree python)	
Giwa (dig)	Hupen ("supernatural" creek mouth)	
Dawei (up, as in "to fly up")	Gokin (short)	
Wai (water, river)	Kwaepe (cheek)	
Genwai (diarrhoea)	krinte (hand)	
Gwae (string bag)		

Transmission and Acquisition of Personal Names

At birth a child receives two personal names which may be announced by either the father or the mother. Although there are no naming rituals, the transmission and acquisition of a personal name is socially regulated, a fact suggested by the kinship statuses of those who announce the child's personal names. The bilateral involvement of the father and mother in the naming of a child draws attention to the place of patrilateral and matrilateral kin in general in Aekyom naming patterns. Significantly, both paternal and maternal relatives at the second ascending terminological level are the source of personal names for a new-born child. Specifically, kiguam (or monai) donate their personal names to male kiunkia, gutekia (or monai) while aepei or ahwi donate their personal names to female kiunkia or gutekia. However, these nominal relationships are not random since the kinship statuses (i.e., relationship categories) of the donor and recipient of a personal name depend on a principle of birth order as well as sex. Table 27 summarizes my field data on this aspect of Aekyom naming practices with respect to personal first names.

This table calls for further comment regarding its statistical basis and the structural implications of nomination for kinship, affinity and descent. The data on which Table 27 is based are derived from a genealogical space in which members (living or dead) of hamlets associated with Drimgas village can be located. The kinship statuses of donors that appear to the left of the oblique line occur with far greater frequency than those to the right. However, for males, the kinship statuses on either side of the oblique line are structurally congruent at the level of the relationship terminology and under certain conditions of marriage (see below). For females, the kinship identities of name donors are bifurcated at the level of the relationship terminology as well as under certain conditions of marriage. However, their structural significance vis-à-vis nomination is not reduced because of this.

From a structural point of view, the relationships between the principle of birth order and nomination described in Table 27 can be re-

Table 27.

Akeyom Personal First Names:

Donors and Recipients

Birth Order of Recipient	Sex	Kinship Status of Donor
First born	male	MF/FMB, MFB
	female	MM/MMM, MeZ, MMBeD, FFFZ, FMBW, MFBW
Second born	male	FF/FeB, FFB
	female	FM/FeZ, FFZ, FMZ, FFBW
Third born	male	FF, FFB, FeB
	female	MeZ, FeZ, FFZ

presented and simplified in terms of several interrelated analogies. The more important analogies, expressed as binary oppositions, include the following:

(i) Be : By :: affinity : agnation

(ii) Ze : Zy :: siblingship : affinity

(iii) Z : B :: W : H

A number of preliminary remarks are necessary here in order to fully clarify the meaning of these analogies. It will be recalled that named groups provide the origin and context of agnatic solidarities over time. In terms of collective representations, these solidarities are reproduced on the basis of nominal distinctions: specifically, in terms of common association with a named group (i.e., ancestral tei and tongesu). However, named groups presuppose considerable diversity and ambiguity vis-à-vis totemic affiliations (see Table 25). Significantly, the same range of totemic affiliations is reproduced at the level of personal names (see Table 26) which provide important nominal links with a group (i.e., ancestral tei and tongesu). In this context, bearers of personal names reproduce the group as a nominal and empirical category and ensure its continuity over time. However, this continuous solidarity within a named group is maintained on the basis of conflicting principles. In order to reproduce a named tongesu at the level of agnatic relationship, the integrity of the group is to some extent compromised by the dependence of the tongesu on non-agnatic relationships to reconstitute its membership. Thus, despite agnatic co-membership in a tongesu, a first-born male is nominally separated from successive males on the basis of an opposition between affinal and agnatic connections, respectively. More specifically, the relationship between siblings-in-law (mote) at the second ascending terminological level articulates, in nominal terms, the relationship between siblings at the second descending terminological level. A similar pattern is repeated for the nominal association between a first born female and successive sisters. Here, female agnates are grouped together on the basis of affinal ties with the donors of personal first names. Finally, the model for nominal association between male and female agnates (i.e., angei, gmore, aepei, auke) is the relationship between husband and wife

since first or second born males or females take their personal first names from their MF and MM or FF and FM respectively.

The structural tension and conflict inherent in the pattern of personal first names and naming would seem to be at least partially resolved by the practice of assigning a personal second name to the child. Invariably, a male or female child receives the personal first name of the father as his or her personal second name, regardless of birth order. Together with the inheritance of the father's tongesu name, this practice would seem to counter the nominally divisive effects of the pattern of personal first names. However, if the "ideal" asymmetrical cross cousin or mote marriage is practiced between localized tongesu in the first ascending terminological level or generation, a most interesting nominal pattern emerges.

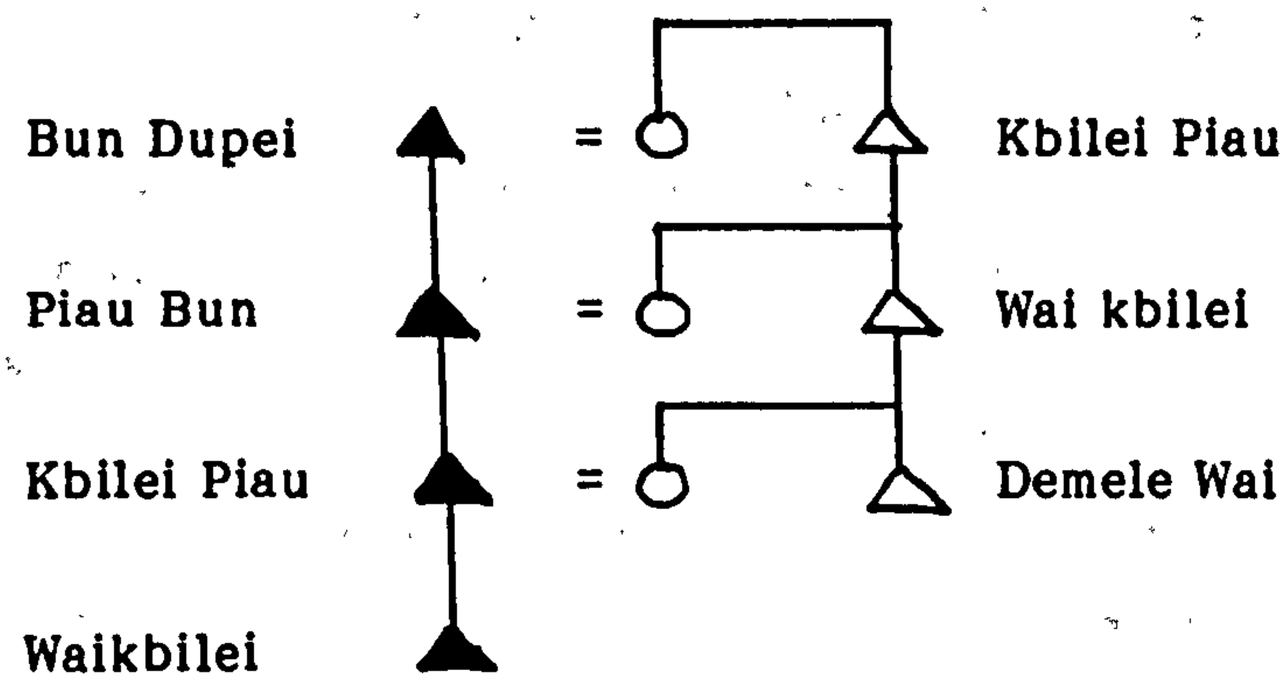
The greatest impact of this type of marriage on nominal definitions of the tongesu occurs in the case of a first-born male who takes as a wife his MBD or mote. The major aim of the marriage is to reproduce the tongesu and in particular a F-S relationship. But insofar as a first-born (or eldest) son ensures the continuity of an agnatic relationship, he does so as the nominal incarnation of his MF or kiguam/monai. Under conditions of matrilateral cross cousins or mote marriage, such nominal incarnation is complete at the personal level despite the assumption of the father's personal first name by the son as his personal second name. This principle is illustrated in Diagram 6 below, which represents a hypothetical pattern of the distribution of personal names among first born males. Such a pattern, however, is frequently realized empirically as the statistical data on Aekyom marriages as well as Diagram 4 indicate (see Chapter 4).

Nominally, then, the recycling of a tongesu is premised on ambiguous membership in the tongesu of one's agnates and the tongesu of one's affines. All brothers of the first born male also have ambiguous identities in this context since their invariable nominal association with the father as first-born male or with the FeB (kiguam) relates them to the

Diagram 6.

Distribution of Personal Names:

First Born Males, Mote Marriages*



* Key:

Colour Code	Tongesu Name	Totem
black	Drim	tim tree/fruit, knikni bird
white	Gre	pig, knikni bird

aepua (MB, WF) and kiguam (MF, WFF) of their senior male agnates. Yet it will also be appreciated that especially under conditions of asymmetrical cross cousin marriage no male member of a tongesu-as-agnatic group fully replicates a male agnate in the first or second ascending terminological level in terms of personal names. Full nominal replication in this context occurs only between a first-born male and his MF/WFF. This has important implications for the nature by which tongesu as nominal descent categories and localized groups are reproduced.

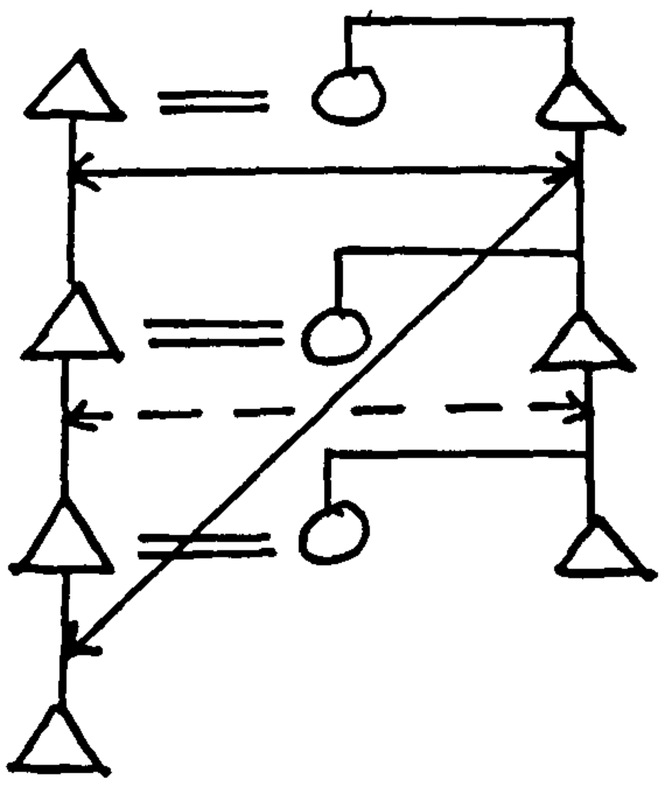
Significantly, the nominal relationship between ego's F and FF at the personal level is not involved in the reconstitution of the tongesu as a nominal descent group. For example, one cannot fold the nominal relationship between F and FF back onto the relationship between ego and his son and thereby establish nominally symmetrical identities at the personal level which parallel common identification among members of a tongesu with a distinct group name. Rather, congruence between group and personal names is achieved via the dialectical opposition and transposition of nominal relationships at and between alternate levels of descent. These ideas are expressed in Diagram 7 below.

In the context of mote marriage it may be seen that the relationship between MB/WF and ZS/DH is an ambiguous, mediating relationship crucial to the reproduction of an agnatic relation. This is reflected, first of all, in the distribution of tia and gutekolei as relationship terms or the place of tia as a linguistic/relationship element of a collective term for the sister's son's (e.g., diomditia). Secondly, it is apprent in view of ego's nominal links with both his father (ai) and MB (apeua).

It is striking that both the relationship terminology and the naming system define these latter kinship statuses as distinct – although they are indirectly related on a nominal basis through their nominal relationships with ego. Viewed from another angle, the F and MB as mote do not share personal names. However, the nominal distance between mote and its associated social distance are neutralized or at least reduced by two important mechanisms: (i) institutionalized joking; and (ii) the use of

Diagram 7.

The Reproduction of Tongesu*



* Key: ←——————→ = nominal opposition

←– – – – – – –→ = nominal mediation

 = nominal transposition

teknonyms and "pandanus names" between husband and wife.

As we have seen, for the purposes of marriage mote are "different" or "affines". But the nature of social reproduction in Aekyom society demands that they be "similar" or "kin" over time. This dilemma is resolved or "masked" to some extent through the application of teknonyms and "pandanus names".

To reiterate, husband and wife do not use one another's personal names. In some instances, the neutral categories ala and knu will be used in situations of reference and address. At other times, teknonyms or "pandanus namės" are used. Insofar as teknonyms or "pandanus names" refer to kinship ties, they reflect the dual or bilateral character of Aekyom descent as a biological concept and cultural idiom.[6]

The Aekyom are quite clear regarding their theories of procreation and their relationship to descent categories. A man's semen (golei) mixes with a woman's blood (kapi) in order to produce a child in the womb (tia aewe). Significantly, it may be added here that Aekyom views on the growth of the foetus confirm the male gender of the developing child who will, upon birth, be assigned membership in the father's tongesu. According to my informants, the foetus' head is formed first, a part of the human anatomy associated with the male dimension of "the above". However, the Aekyom also refer to semen as kapi, "blood", a linguistic and symbolic equation that suggests the idea of equal contributions by the father and the mother to the child's physical constitution. Indeed, among the Aekyom one does not find a binary opposition of the form

male : female :: bone : blood

which elsewhere in New Guinea (e.g., Bateson, 1958) serves to define, physically and socially, the nature of the child. As my informants put it, "the child's blood is that of the mother and father. Bone is something by itself." This statements are consistent with other Aekyom views which profess that blood, a concrete image of bilateral descent concepts, is produced by eating meat,[7] a metaphor for agnation. More importantly, blood is also produced by the consumption of pandanus, particuarly wild

pandanus or sio. It is striking, therefore, that sio is used in the manner of a teknonym between husband and wife.

It may be concluded with some confidence then that Aekyom teknonyms or "pandanus names" over-emphasize the consanguineal or "blood" relationship essential to the reproduction of tongesu members as they under-emphasize the affinal nature of the relationship between mote. This conclusion in turn illuminates the significance of certain wild and cultivated varieties of pandanus such as tiepe, gasnai, skai, sni and bro as personal and group names, totemic affiliations and cosmic categories. It follows that as expressions of descent, the giving, receiving, and use of names involves and reflects the transmission and transformation of cultural and spiritual qualities or forces that reciprocally reproduce particular agnatic relationships — for example, those that define the relationship between MF and MB or F and S — between groups that maintain the continuity of the tongesu as a nominal descent group and as a localized group. It may reasonably be concluded on this evidence that descent among the Aekyom is not a patrilineal concept but a dialectical relationship category, symbolized by, among other things, the interrelations between meat, blood and bone.

According to Aekyom mythology, these cultural and spiritual attributes of the tongesu and its membership reach back to the beginnings of time when human ancestors and their totems were fused in the process of creation. During this epoch tongesu were know as tei or "categories of meat". These "categories of meat" were then transformed in the process of reproduction to create named tongesu. Now, in Aekyom thought meat may be transformed in either one of two ways in both "gastronomic" and "culinary" settings. In terms of gastronomic concepts, meat may be eaten to produce either blood or excrement, as was pointed out to me by my informants.[8] In terms of culinary concepts, meat may be either cooked by fire or subjected to a process of supernatural rotting. Cooking and eating are, of course, metaphors for sexual intercourse and cultural creation/birth while rotting and defecation are metaphors for death and spiritual rebirth. Given that the first male representatives of tei-as-

"meat"-or-social categories are identified by the Aekyom by their personal and group names,[9] as well as by the relationship terms kiguam or monai, we may illustrate the cultural and spiritual elaboration/transformation of totemic ancestors, or the process of descent, by Diagram 8 below.

The diagram is constructed in such a way that by alternately folding in and spreading out the diagram along its vertical and horizontal axes, the tripartitioning of categories (cultural, spiritual, descent) disappears and re-appears, thereby demonstrating

(i) the coherence of the system as a whole at the level of collective representations;

(ii) the structural signficance and meaning of symmetry and asymmetry in the relationship terminology; and

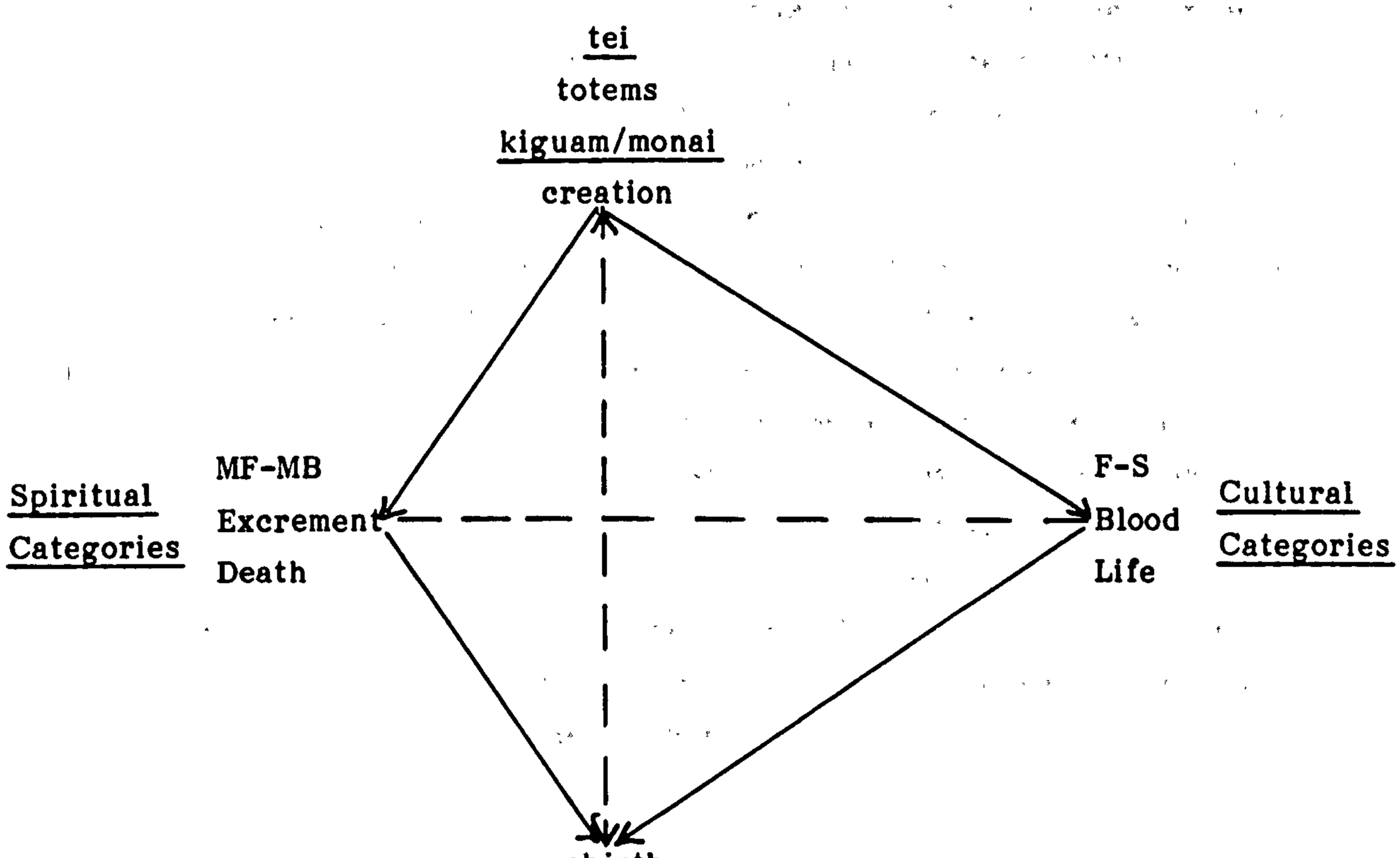
(iii) the relationship between symmetrical and asymmetrical forms of marriage exhange vis-à-vis the idioms and mechanisms of descent.

The final two points call for further comment. In contrast to marriage with one's sene or sen mote (e.g., MBD), marriage with gute/mote (e.g., FZD) either short circuits the cycle of rebirth by bypassing a crucial spiritual element (e.g., categories of "death") or, as a reflection of bilateral cross-cousin marriage or symmetrical exchange, remains within the mythological realm of spiritual equivalence thereby disrupting the coherence of a "line" of descent as a cultural category. On the other hand, asymmetrical cross cousin (or mote) marriage in the human community reestablishes the tongesu as a kinship and descent concept. But as it succeeds in this effort, it matches nominal relationships, defined at the personal level, between groups that are also opposed to one another on the basis of group names. As a result, asymmetrical marriage exchange institutes spiritual asymmetry (cf. Goldman, 1975; Mauss, 1967) or the bifurcation of descent into cultural and spiritual categories.

It is a reasonable expectation that this issue should represent a major concern or problematic in Aekyom society and, therefore, provide an important topic for mythological discourse. In the next chapter we shall see to what extent these expectations are met through an examination of

Diagram 8.

Nominal Categories and the Process of Descent*



* Key: Horizontal dotted line: = dialectical opposition
Diagonal lines = mediation, transformation
Vertical dotted lines: = nominal/terminological synthesis; descent

selected aspects of Aekyom mythology. There is, however, one other dimension to the naming system, not yet discussed, that may shed some light on the structure and meaning of Aekyom myths.

As noted in previous chapters, pigs and dogs have both utilitarian and symbolic value for the Aekyom. Not surprisingly, then, pigs and dogs acquire personal names that futher serve to articulate the nature of their relationships with the human community. Pigs acquire personal names from their owners. However, while there may be variation in the content of pigs' names that parallels that of human names, pig names are frequently taken from the bird world. Dogs too acquire personal names from their owners, whose content is closely associated with birds. However, despite their common association with birds in a nominal context, the structure of human and pig names differ from that of dog names. Humans and pigs, on the one hand, acquire the names of birds in the full image of the bird (i.e., they are metaphorically identified with birds). Dogs, on the other hand, have bird names that refer only to aspects of a bird. Thus, naming a dog Wasei after the wasei bird implies a connection between the dog's hair and the bird's feathers — in this case, the colour brown (i.e., dogs are metonymically identified with birds). The implications of this difference for issues of kinship and descent are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Summary

This chapter provides a more focussed discussion of names and naming as a structural theme in society and culture. The substantive, methodological and theoretical issues relevant to a study of Aekyom nomination are introduced by way of a brief review of global ethnography. Here it is concluded that in addition to its classificatory value, nomination has both use and exchange values for group definitions, structure and membership which are clearly articulated within wider social and religious contexts. As a result, the cultural, religious and inter-relational qualities of names are given serious attention in an assessment of the nature of the relationship between nomination and descent in Aekyom society.

The discussion begins with a general overview of group names among human communities situated in geographical space and collectivities located in cosmic space. The structure of the latter realm in particular provides a concise summary of familiar gender, totemic and vertical distinctions that describe relations of kinship and affinity among groups in the human community as well as the principles that underly the reproduction of nominal configurations and beings. These issues are then related to group definitions, memberships and structure. A description of Aekyom totemic affiliations at the level of the tongesu draws attention to certain themes that express fundamental structural ambiguities. These themes highlight a principle of "identity and difference" established for other collective representations in Chapter 4 as well as the integration of natural, cultural and supernatural categories. The meaning of Aekyom totemic affiliations is approached by first examining the linguistic and symbolic relevance of hamlet names. It is concluded that as nominal categories, hamlet names encode and encapsulate a symbolic sense of and reference to group definitions, interrelations and structure that span human and spiritual realms in the context of social reproduction. The implications of this argument of Aekyom personal names provide the context of a detailed discussion of Aekyom concepts of descent and their relationship to agnation and affinity.

These issues are developed through an examination of the content and distributional patterns of Aekyom personal names and the principles that structure their transmission and acquisition. Significantly, the content and distribution of personal names reflects the integration of natural, cutlural and supernatural categories described for totemic affiliations at the level of the tongesu. This association between group definitions and membership is reaffirmed and consolidated in terms of the relationship between the donors and recipients of personal names. Based on principles of birth order and sex, the transmission and acquisition of personal names reconstitute groups as nominal categories. However, the integrity of the tongesu as a unilineal concept is undermined by the dialectical opposition beween agnatic and non-agnatic factors such as matrilateral and affinal relationship in the reproduction of a tongesu as a nominal configuration. This results in a concept of descent as a dialectical category constituted by a diachronic interrelation between cross-sex sibling, cross-cousin and affinal relationships, the synchronic vision of which is an agnatic group or relation between father and son. This overall structure of descent is confirmed by the place of teknonyms and "pandanus names" in the Aekyom naming system. These names and the conditions of their use consistently relate a biological conception of descent to its expression at the level of cultural idioms.

Finally, aspects of the Aekyom "culinary triangle" described in Chapter 4 are brought to bear on the exposition of the process of descent as a dialectic between natural, cultural and supernatural categories of beings. This serves to further illuminate the organization of kinship as a cultural and religious phenomenon and draw attention to the function and meaning of Aekyom marriage. As mechanisms for the articulation of agnatic, nominal and descent categories, symmetric and asymmetric forms of marriage in ritual and practice establish the spiritual preconditions and cultural coherence of a "line" of descent, respectively.

CHAPTER 6. MYTH AND SOCIETY: REFLECTIONS ON KINSHIP, MARRIAGE AND DESCENT

Introduction

In previous chapters I have tried to show how materials drawn from different sectors of Aekyom society and culture contribute to an understanding of group definitions, structure and interrelations. Specifically, my concern has been to examine the articulation of social categories at the levels of kinship, marriage and descent and to highlight the place of cultural idioms within this overall pattern. The present chapter takes up these themes and places them in the context of Aekyom mythology. However, before turning directly to the myths, it will prove useful to take stock of where the discussion is leading by showing the relationship between the ethnographic material already presented and the substantive, methodological and theoretical issues that guide the study of the myths.

In Chapter 3 a discussion of the principles of group formation draws attention to the status of the agnatic collectivity as the basic unit of hamlet organization. For example, it is the most important property-holding group that constrains economic activity, settlement patterns, marriage practices and political association as well as the main focus of hamlet cultural definitions. However, Chapters 4 and 5 progressively demonstrate that a conception of the hamlet-based tongesu as an independent, coherent unity is largely an artifact of temporal stasis. Indeed, the forms and conditions of its continued existence undermine its conceptual status as a unilineal agnatic group. Insofar as reproduction of the tongesu-as-agnatic relation is articulated on the basis of nominal categories it is an ambiguous configuration predicated on matrilateral or affinal relations. In this context, the agnatic group as a cultural phenomenon is an incomplete segment of a much wider universe. Indeed, the idea of the tongesu expresses essential religious convictions about the

nature of connections between contemporary hamlets, their mythological founders and the source of their re-creation. This is not to deny the sociological aspects of this wider universe but rather to place them within a religious framework that informs, for example, alliance relationships with a purpose and meaning beyond the more tangible implications of social exchange.

Recently, the status of religious frameworks in New Guinea has been the focus of debate, particularly over the question of whether or not religious orders have been "misconstrued" by some anthropologists reporting on them. For example, Brunton (1980) and Johnson (1981:472-474) argue that some New Guinea religious representations have been over-systematized as a function of either anthropological method or the politics of anthropological professionalism. These critics suggest that some religious orders may be far more contingent, context-dependent and "dis-orderly" than some anthropologists have made them out to be. Others, such as Gell (1980:735-737) and Juillerat (1980:732-734) argue that anthropologists may sometimes underestimate the scope and depth of integrated systems of religious thought in New Guinea, a sentiment partly reflected in Jorgensen's (1981:470-472) claim that the artificiality of anthropologists' constructions may stem not from an excess of externally imposed meanings but from a deficiency of genuine native meanings.

One cannot deny that the diversity and uniformity among New Guinea cultures do give rise to apparently conflicting observations. In some areas, religious configurations may be expressed in more complete, consistent and articulate statements while in other areas they appear more confused, incoherent and uncertain. Yet it does not seem unreasonable to argue that <u>all</u> these factors are aspects of the human condition in any given society. Methodologically, this implies that a far more fundamental question is being asked by New Guineans with respect to religious issues: specifically, they are asking, "What does it mean to be human?" Consequently, what is often presented to anthropologists is a model or set of models that offer suggestions on how humans should be defined and understood. Therefore, one can hardly expect uniform responses to this

universal question, even in small-scale societies. Answers to such all-encompassing questions are by their nature divergent and tentative if it is assumed that a people recognize both humanity's limitations and its potentialities (Landmann, 1974:21-23). This perspective on "misconstrued religious orders" precludes neither a comprehensive, calculated approach to "the human question" nor the acknowledgement of failure to provide clear, concise and consistent answers. It does, however, seriously question assertions as to the inherently "closed" or fundamentally "open" nature of religious views and practices.

For the Aekyom, questions about the human condition cannot be asked or answered outside of reference to groups and, in particular, to named groups. The most general model of "humanity" in Aekyom culture is provided by the cosmos. The ordering of humanity within the cosmos, however, is in part derived from mythology. More importantly, it is mythology that provides the primary source of information about the origin of humans and their institutions, about how humans came to be what they are, or how the tongesu in fact were transformed from tei. At issue in this chapter, therefore, is the nature of myth and the manner of its reflection on the question of being human.

As a first step, I shall examine "myth" as a category of Aekyom language and its implications for time frames. This is followed by a brief review of theories of myth which guide my approach to the content, structure and meaning of Aekyom myths. Finally, I discuss selected aspects of Aekyom mythology that have a particular bearing on kinship, marriage and descent as aspects of the human condition.

Aekyom Language and Myth: Speech Forms and Temporal Frames

In the Aekyom language, "myth" is a form of speech or swa. Generally, swa conveys the idea of talking as in the phrase no Aekyom swa brema. "I know how to talk (or speak) Aekyom". Also, there is talk

between "us" – swa triai ("we are talking") as well as the talk of others – wíkè swa ("people talking over there"). However, swa may be qualified depending on what is being talked about. For example, "we" or "they" may be talking about people, places or events that may be identified with the past, present or future. To be precise, there are six tenses in the Aekyom language which serve to locate people, events, etc. in time (see Rule and Rule, 1970:50-55). These include:

(i) **present continuous tense:** this tense is used when describing events which are in the process of going on at the time of speaking or as an extension of events which have just taken place a short while previously but the memory of which is so vivid in the mind that they seem as if they are still going on;

(ii) **future tense:** this tense is used whenever it is desired to speak of an event that is going to take place in the future, either in the immediate future or at any time in the future;

(iii) **hortative future tense:** this tense is always used when the speaker desires to suggest or to urge another person or persons to do something with him or her (e.g., Kyo yoke gwye, "Let's sing a song.");

(iv) **near past tense:** this tense is used to describe events which took place at any time previous to the present on the day of speaking;

(v) **mid past tense:** this tense is used when it is desired to refer to events which happened yesterday or at any other time in the near past, back as far as a few years; and

(vi) **distant past tense:** this tense is used when it is desired to speak about events which have taken place a very long time ago, i.e., earlier than 20 years or so previously.

According to the Aekyom, the origin of humans took place a very

long time ago in the distant past. These events, however, have been recorded in a certain type of "talk" called song swa which may be distinguished from other types of "talk". There are, for example, klaeklaemen swa, that is "fairy tales" or "stories about things that didn't really happen", including "jokes", as well as hamasakweila swa, historical narratives and accounts of migrations. While this latter form of "talk" may describe events that have taken place in the distant past, it is never qualified by the term song. What then is distinctive about song?

As a category of language, song does not occur in isolation. It appears either as a qualifier of "talk" (e.g., song swa) or as an element of adverbs of time, such as sempsongmena. This adverb may be broken down into the segments sem + song + mena. Mena means "with" or "characterized by". Sem, on the other hand, has two closely related meanings. In the context of the near past tense it means "already" while in the context of the distant past tense it means "some time ago". Similarly, sempsongmena means either "already" (in the near past) or "a very long time ago" (in the distant past). Since song is compatable with both adverbial meanings it is not unreasonable to conclude that song swa or myths have a capacity to bridge time frames and are not confined, like some of the events of historical narratives, to a discrete primeval past (cf. Moore, 1964:1313). On the other hand, they do not appear to be "machines for the suppression of time" (Lévi-Strauss, 1966b) since they do not violate the authenticity of a primeval condition relative to the contemporary world (Goldman, 1975:105). But while the reality myth presents is not synonymous with that of the contemporary, everyday world, it is nevertheless integral to an understanding of the Aekyom human condition. This distinction has important implications for theories of myth which are discussed below.

Myth as Reflection: Content, Structure and Meaning

For most social anthropologists, interest in mythology stems from a more general orientation towards society and culture. Consequently there is a tendency to reject notions of myth as flights of fantasy or more seriously as expressions or manifestations of individual or collective psychological states and processes (e.g., Freud, 1955; Jung, 1964; Roheim, 1950). Alternatively, social anthropologists look to the social and cultural conditions under which a people live when addressing the issues of content, structure and meaning in myth. However, it is also in terms of these issues that anthropological approaches to the study of myth begin to diverge.

As Cove (1983:6-11) has argued, the writings of Franz Boas occupy a central position in the development of ideas about the nature of myth and mythological reflection.[1] Indeed, one may abstract from Boas' voluminous descriptions of the Indians of the Northwest Pacific Coast of Canada a number of substantive, methodological and theoretical themes that have either anticipated developments by other scholars working in the area of symbolism or stimulated critical review leading to redefinitions of myth within very different sets of assumptions.

For Boas, oral tradition or myth was of general significance since it consisted of "... the total mass of traditional matter present in the minds of a given people" (Boas, 1901:2-3). From this observation, Boas drew two important conclusions: first, that mythology was at the very core of a culture (Stocking, 1968:225) and secondly, that myth reflects directly on a people's experience. Boas was not overly naive in drawing this second conclusion. While he felt that mythology was a concrete expression of a culture from and through its own perspective, he did not propose a notion of a disinterested formulation. On the contrary, Boas regarded mythology as a medium through which experiences are selected and manipulated in order to present those points which are of interest to the people themselves. In this sense, they represent the autobiography of a culture in which local interests and understandings are highlighted, problems

defined and a means of coping with them proposed (Boas, 1916:393; 1938:122; 1940:474-475). Thus from Boas' point of view, myths are attentive to the exigencies of ongoing social life since they are continually adjusting to the world of experience. He concluded, therefore, that myths gradually rid themselves of archaic themes through the elimination and substitution of mythic elements (Boas, 1898:18) and in the process support existing institutions (Boas, 1898:16-17). This position, of course, clearly anticipates Malinowski's (1948) view of myth as "charter". At the same time, however, Boas was careful to point out that myths have critical elements built into them. This was suggested, for example, by the appearance of situations and events in myth contradictory to what is actually experienced in social life. That the social environment was not completely acceptable to a people could be read in terms of the presentation of different realities where the consequences of actions and their subsequent sanctioning revealed normative and deviant (but perhaps valued and desired) forms of behaviour (Boas, 1938:610-611; Cove, 1976:174). In this context, Boas also clearly anticipated Lévi-Strauss' (1967) view that myths express potentialities in order to reject them.

These brief comments are sufficient to reveal a most important source of ideas about the nature of myths. While being somewhat neglected in their original form by later generations of anthropologists they have, nevertheless, continued to influence anthropological approaches to the study of myth. Yet, despite their historical currency, Boas' views on mythology fall short of a treatise on mythical meanings, since he did not address the issue of the nature of mythical or, more generally, cultural reflection (Goldman, 1975:12-13).

By and large, the anthropological topic of myth and meaning has been dominated by the epistemology, methods and findings of structuralism. The most direct challenge to Boas' suggestion that myth reflects culture and a people's experience of it has come from Claude Lévi-Strauss. For Lévi-Strauss, myth is largely a reflection of its own linguistic form (e.g., Lévi-Strauss, 1963a; 1969). Thus, while myth may use the data of experience it does so towards its own ends. For example,

myth may often invert reality to show that certain potentialities of situations are untenable or mask or attempt to resolve contraditions for the purpose of preserving the social order. But for structuralism the image it presents only partially corresponds to actual social existence. As a result, the meaning of myth becomes a by-product or epiphenomenon of its structural properties that are analogous to those of language. Yet it is precisely at the level of language as a model for the meaning of myth that Lévi-Strauss' approach becomes difficult to accept, at least in its entirety. For structuralism, the symbolic vision of myth (or totemism) is contained in or delimited by the concept. Concepts, when combined in sentences to form propositions assert factual information about the world or some aspect of the world. Yet facts do not present themselves independently of the frames of reference or perspectives employed to identify, understand or assign meaning to them. It follows that as a set of facts, myths also have meaning within existing frames of reference. However, for the Aekyom, facts are defined within several different but integrated frames of reference. This is clearly illustrated by an incident that occurred while I was collecting various tongesu origin myths. Half way through his story about the origin of the Gre tongesu from pigs, my informant Griawo said,

> Klen ku kuo min yae kei kwen klei kwio min yae kei ku loko ku loko hakan ko wíkè yae kwa kwia wíkè ko mine ("So we are pigs; we do as the pig does until we change ourselves into humans again").

It was only after rebounding from an initial bout of incredulity and skepticism that the significance of what was being said came to me. Like some other New Guinea peoples the Aekyom experience a world consisting of qualitatively different kinds of reality or what Schutz (1945:533-538) calls multiple realities (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1966:19-34). While they may be distinguished from one another, each is no more or no less real, subjectively or objectively, than the other. The difference lies in how the Aekyom orient themselves to these realities. By using concepts the Aekyom come to terms with the empirical world of experience. But by using symbols, the Aekyom shift frames of reference, thereby expanding the horizons of experience and understanding through the integration of concepts with the extra-normal realms of dream, trance, divination,

totemism and myth. Thus, the ambiguity of symbols bridges or mediates multiple realities, permitting them to be experienced as a unity and in the process informing the human condition (cf. Levy-Bruhl, 1975:147-150). In a mythic-totemic context, this implies that "humanity" may be understood and experienced in a more profound sense than can be achieved through the employment of concepts alone.

As stated earlier, native understandings of what it means to be human are presented in their models of the world. As one type of native model, myth places emphasis on the extra-normal realm. As a result, myth consists of symbolic elements. Now this raises an important question: what is the nature of the relation between myth and symbol? It will be recalled that the most important property of the symbol is its ambiguity. Given a situation of multiple realities, the capacity of the symbol to provide a means for their meaningful integration suggests that the symbol is potentially over-loaded with meaning. If they are to have shared meanings and referents, symbolic potentials must be constrained. Otherwise they can be understood in divergent ways according to the possibilities they open up. It is the function of myth to restrict the definitions of symbols and thereby provide an interpretation of them. If, as Ricoeur (1959:60-76) suggests, symbols "invite thought", then it follows that "... myths guide thought to reach certain conclusions" (Cove, 1983:18-19). Since myth is also expressed in a language of concepts, the linguistic and referential contexts of myth must constrain the meaning potential of symbols. As a result, a world made by myth permits access to an interpretation of symbols in its own terms. Bearing in mind that the myths presented to the ethnographer are already Aekyom interpretations of symbols (or of other myths) the task of analysis is, in Wagner's (1975:29) terms, to "invent" an interpretation of mythic symbols which mediates between their culture and the culture of the ethnographer.

Thus we have come full circle. In what follows it will be assumed that, contrary to particular positions held by Boas and Lévi-Strauss, Aekyom myth is concerned "... not with presenting an objective vision of the world, but to present man's true understanding of himself in the world

in which he lives" (Rasmussen, 1971:10; cf. Burridge, 1967). Among the Aekyom that world is firmly grounded in the multiple realities of kinship, marriage and descent.

Aekyom Texts

In this section I provide an interpretation of three myths drawn from a corpus of more than 80 Aekyom myths collected during fieldwork. Although men usually told the myths, mythology is not exclusive to males, as some women also know myths, some of which were told to me by them (see Depew, 1982).

Each myth was recorded in the Aekyom language on a small tape recorder, then transcribed immediately and then translated into English. When difficulties were encountered with the vernacular, I consulted the narrator of the tale and interested others for clarification. In particular, my field assistant, Kaem, provided invaluable advice and insight with respect to these matters. For each myth, the English translation follows the original Aekyom text as closely as possible. However, redundant passages, such as excessively repetitive sentences, were deleted while some stylistic changes were made where the myth became somewhat cumbersome in English translation.

The first tale, narrated by Dmape of Graihei hamlet, relates to origin of his tongesu, the Drim. Sometime later, I recorded a variant of this myth told by Dmape's elder brother (angei), Man. Since Man's version provides content that differs from Dmape's version, the relevant information is included in the subsequent discussion. The next story offers an "explanation" as to why birds live in trees. Two very similar versions of this myth were told to me by Man and Hia, residents of Grahei hamlet and Tminsiriap village, respectively. Hia's version is reproduced below. Hia also related the story about the origin of Aekyom marriage, which is the final myth discussed in this work.

M_1 The Origin of Drim by Dmape

My people are called Drim but long ago we had no name. An old man was walking around and saw the tree called tim. The tree had a hollow in it and inside the hollow there was talking. The old man was looking around to see where the sound came from. A boy and a girl were talking inside the tree hollow. Then the old man put his head against the side of the tree and heard talking inside the tree. He went away to his house to sleep and next morning came back to the tim tree with an axe. He cut down the tree and then split the trunk. He saw the boy and girl inside the tree and got them. Then, he took them to his house and fed them until they grew into a young man and woman. The old man said they should get married. Next, the three of them went to Tumenai hamlet. Here the young man and woman gave birth to all the Drim people but they had no name. They were born with no name. But the old man, his young companions and their children stayed in Tumenai. The Gre people came from Hawinai. An old Gre man built a cassowary hunting blind behind the cassowary's fruit tree and then went home. But while he was out hunting the next day, the Gre people cut up and ate his cassowary. When the old Gre man returned to his house his wife told him what had happened. She complained that she did not receive any cassowary meat. The old man quarrelled with the Gre people. Because of the quarrel he left Hawinai with his wife and half the Gre people and came to Tumenai. When the Gre people arrived in Tumenai the Drim asked them who they were and where they came from. They said, "We come from Hawinai, half of us, that's all." They all slept at Memgu creek then crossed it. The women went first and drained the creek. Then, those two cousins (mote), the old Gre man and Drim man, went down and hit the water with kaiyokei (Derris root) and killed an eel. Then, they cut up the eel into many pieces and joined them together over and over again. They were trying to share that eel between them. As they were doing this, a bird called knikni flew over their heads calling out "Gre Drim, Gre Drim, Gre Drim." The old Drim man stood oup and said, "Oh mote that bird, calling out like that: you are Gre and I am Drim." Then all the people went inside the house. The Drim man stood up and said, "You people on the dine (fireplace) side of the house are Gre, and you people on the other side are Drim." All joined in and shouted, "Oh, their eel, they killed it and cut it up and when they sat down knikni called out, "Gre Drim, Gre Drim. You are Gre, I am Drim." Then the Drim man said, "I am the owner of this place; I am from this place (Tumenai); this is where I make my fire so this is my place and you are Gre.

Drim have been the owners of the land (Graihei) for a long time. Later the Gasei people came. The Drim gave them women, land, sago and water. The Drim went out and said, "You get Mnaembi creek, Tunam mountain and dni sand beach; my place is the mouth of gongon creek. They then sat down.

It was a long time before the Drim decided the ground was a muddy, swampy place. Men and women couldn't walk around on the ground; it was not good; they couldn't do it, no. So they decided to go and look for animals — sniai (possum), dumga (giant rat), kupenai (possum), somenai (possum), sine dio (water python), ware (green tree python), kiun (black water python). They got dio, ware and kiun and took out their teeth. Then they tied all those animals to their hair. So they made the swampy ground hard, and in some places they planted sago. Next, they cut sticks and made a bridge across the mouth of gongon creek. On their way to the creek they sang "Skupe orimei biskwei biskwei biskwei", a song about smoking tobacco. Arriving at the creek mouth, they called out to the other side of the Fly River; "Are you human?" An echo replied, "No, not human. I am saying this since I stay on this side of the Fly River after you have called out from the other side." Hearing this, the Drim went down, cut the tmi palm, pushed it into the river and said, "Your penis will be larger." Those on the other side of the Fly cut the tmi palm, pushed it into the river and said, "Your penis will be smaller." Then the Drim people went back to Tumenai and those on the other side of the Fly went back to their place.

This tale begins with the statement of a problem: in the beginning the Drim were nameless. However, as the story unfolds it becomes clear that the acquisition of a name is central to the nature and definition of kinship groups and to the broader issue of what it means to be human in Aekyom society.

As a regular feature of the myth, group ancestries are traced ultimately to the prior existence of a male. In M_1 he is an old man while in a variant of M_1 (M_{1a}) he is a boy who emerges from the ripened fruit of the tim tree, which has fallen to the ground. Although the myth assigns precedence to males vis-à-vis Aekyom ancestries and, therefore, remains consistent with the agnatic status of contemporary localized kinship

groups, the representation of the process of descent in the context of group identity and membership suggests a more complicated way in which the Aekyom remember or think about ancestral lines.

There are several important preliminary observations that may be made here that serve to inform the mythological status of these "first" males. In M_1, the "first" man is identified by his old age and location in the bush. In Aekyom thought, both these features are closely tied to identification with spiritual categories. More importantly, the age discrepancy between the old man and the children he frees from the tree hollow indicates a monai ("cassowary") relationship between them (i.e., they are members of alternate terminological levels) and, therefore, suggests a theme of renewal or rebirth. This interpretation is directly confirmed by two related events in M_{1a}. First, the boy's emergence from the tim fruit is tantamount to a rebirth.[2] And second, he later attempts to burn the tim tree, whose hollow shelters a girls, in a hunting house (slewe). While the hunting house projects an image of killing and death, the burning of the tim tree conveys the idea of transformation and re-creation. However, the boy is stopped short of completely burning the tree when he hears the girl inside imploring him not to burn her, but to split the wood and take her out. Significantly, the actions of both males in this myth become oriented and directed in relation to speech, a human quality. In M_1, the old man is drawn to the tim tree by human speech, while in M_{1a} the boy first becomes aware of human speech, indirectly locates its source and then frees the girl from the tree hollow under her verbal directions:

> He heard someone talking and went off looking for its source. Finding nothing, he came back and then went off in another direction but still saw nothing. He found the tim tree which had a large knot, cut it down and put it in the slewe which he had built in order to burn the tree. But there was a girl inside and she shouted, "Don't burn me!; split the wood and take me out."

This passage highlights another important aspect of male status which is elaborated and repeated later in M_1 as well as in M_2 and M_3. It is clear that complementary modes of communication serve to distinguish humans who speak from "non-humans" who look and listen. Stated more precisely,

although they are not spirits, the old man and boy in M_1 and M_{1a}, respectively, are of a spiritual category. As "first" males their mythological status parallels the ritual status of other "first" males (e.g., angei, kiguam) who represent the groom's group during the kwia kwiamen marriage dance, an event that I have suggested is essentially spiritual in nature. Given the theme of reproduction in both myth and ritual, it is striking how and under what conditions humans are extracted from the tree hollow. In M_1, the old man sleeps before returning to split the tree with his axe while in M_{1a} the boy "kills" then "resurrects" the girl. It follows that "first" males in this myth mediate, as spiritual categories, the reproduction of the human group. It is obvious then why the humans are inside the tree in the first place. The tree, or more specifically the trunk (su) is a concrete image of the human group or tongesu which spans cosmic space and time.

The complementary relationship between humans and spirit categories is elaborated in the myth at the gastronomic level. The old man feeds the children until they are ready to reproduce. Significantly they marry one another and then give birth to all the Drim. Although it is not explicitly stated in M_1, it may be inferred from their common origin that the boy and girl are brother and sister. This inference is confirmed by M_{1a} when the girl, emerging from the tree hollow, announces to the boy "You are my brother." While the Aekyom regard marriage between siblings in everyday life as nononkina, "stupid, ignorant, ridiculous", there is no indication that the matrimonial union of cross sex siblings in myth is regarded in this way (cf. Moore, 1964). We may, therefore, draw an important conclusion: structural ambiguity is a prerequisite of reproduction and descent within the tongesu. Put more technically, the analogy B : Z :: H : W underpins the integrity of kinship groups insofar as these relations, as constitutive of a "first" marriage, are spiritually symmetrical and necessary for group continuity. Yet it may be stated at the same time that symmetry is not sufficient for definitions of culturally coherent groups or "lines" of descent. Indeed, all the Drim are born with no name in the myth. This is, perhaps, as it should be since as members of tei they belong to an undifferentiated "category of meat".

The role of meat in establishing nominal groups is a theme taken up in the next series of events. Here the story briefly shifts its focus onto the Gre of Hawinai hamlet where several issues arise in connection with the provisioning and distribution of cassowary meat. The repetition of certain structural themes may be immediately recognized. For example, the old Gre man, like the old Drim man, stands in a significant relationship to the category monai, "cassowary". In order to "kill" the cassowary, the old Gre man must cross a cosmic boundary, but only on the condition that he be spiritually "acceptable". But while he is "away" — i.e., in a spiritual state — his human agnates consume the cassowary meat, refusing to share with anyone outside the agnatic community. However, this denial of reciprocity and complementary relationships — in this case affinity and spirituality — leads to the denial of agnatic unity. Thus, rather than reproducing the community of agnates via the recycling of "meat categories", "self-indulgence" within the Gre community leads to social discontinuity or breakdown in the form of group fission.

The story then takes up and develops these and some other familiar themes when the Gre encounter the Drim at Tumenai. Again, a verbal exchange confirms their humanity but betrays their culturally incoherent status as groups: both the Drim and the Gre are nameless. Nevertheless, in preparation for nomination they must redefine their condition in spiritual terms: so they sleep near a creek mouth. Next day it is the women who "drain" or dam the creek so that the men may fish. This suggests, first of all, that females have a special affinity with fish and secondly, that male action is predicated on a female principle. With the poisonous and supernatural derris root "juice" the men catch and kill an eel.

At this point the eel meat is in a structurally inverted position relative to the cassowary meat and males who wish to consume these meat categories. Although its meat is cut up like the cassowary meat, the eel meat is shared between "cousins" (mote) rather than hoarded among agnates. More importantly, it is reciprocal action between cross cousins that forges their unity while at the same time differentiating them

nominally. Significantly, this idea is expressed linguistically at the level of group names. The name Drim, for example, seems to be a derivative of the verb drima, which means "to join repeatedly".

Placed in a diachronic perspective, the Drim tongesu as a name group is re-constituted by reciprocal action between male mote. That action is premised on a female principle which in its socio-cultural manifestation refers to matrilateral or affinal connection. Reinterpreted in a religious context, such connections expand into cosmic proportions with a symbolic focus on rebirth and renewal. The eel-as-meat is an appropriate symbol here as it conveys a more profound sense of agnatic continuity and descent group membership that cross-cut nominal boundaries between groups in order to encompass a wider human community in a spiritual unity. As a subterranean with the power of renewal, the eel-as-meat reinstates structural unity or spiritual symmetry between bilateral or affinal groups. However, a principle of agnatic transposition in the myth through the sharing of eel meat between mote (cross-cousins, siblings-in-law) is temporarily displaced by a principle of cultural asymmetry, represented by the bird and its call, so that agnatic groups can exist empirically. Here, the mortal knikni bird, who calls out the group names in human speech, appropriately symbolizes an historical sense of local hamlet group identity. Indeed, cultural differentiation in human terms is confirmed in the myth by its pronouncement in a most human environment — the hamlet house. Yet it is also clear that "Greness" or "Drimness" is a result of group bifurcation along cultural dimensions rather than group fission along natural dimensions since the bird, as symbol of agnation, is name donor to both tongesu. As a result, "agnatic halves" may be recombined into a whole in the image of "birdness" under conditions of social reproduction and group renewal.

At this point, the myth seems to be punctuated with a comment on the business of getting on with life as a human community. Alliances are established and territorial boundaries decided while gardens must be made fruitful if people are to "walk around" — i.e., to grow and develop. To

establish the fertility and growth of the sago gardens which parallel the life cycle of the human being or the group's membership, tei animals and snakes, symbols of group identity and renewal, are tied to the hair/head the locus of agnatic growth and development. Significantly, before tying these animals to their hair the Drim remove the snakes' teeth, an act that seems to be a symbolic statement about seasonal periodicity,[3] or the cycle of life, death and rebirth.

While the ground becomes hard — like bone? — and therefore supports life-sustaining and life-creating sago, it would appear that the cyclical nature of the sago garden's human counterpart, the tei, is in question. Put another way, the spiritual aspect of the tei is incomplete. This is suggested, first of all, by the building of the bridge to gongon creek which, being adjacent to the Fly River, is a key socio-religious boundary. Secondly the intention of the human community to re-establish communication links with the spirit world is indicated, at the most general level, by their singing. As Goldman (1975:10) notes, "... singing ... is unquestionably a religious act since singing (along with dancing) is the appropriate mode of communication with the spirits" (see also Depew, 1982; Schwimmer, 1984). This proposition is confirmed in more specific terms since the song they are singing is about smoking tobacco. For the Aekyom, tobacco is a narcotic used by diviners under ritual conditions as a means of communicating with spirits. Again the nature of the subsequent verbal exchange bears this out. The question asked, "Are you human?", is responded to in the negative. But the spiritual element is not dissociated from the human community since the former mimics or mirrors the latter's speech in the form of an echo. While the echo is not human speech and therefore an indicator of spiritual modes of communication, it is, nevertheless, a verbal mask designed to effect an exchange and transformation of powers between "equals". What kind of powers are involved is foretold by all the "walking and talking" that precedes the human encounter with the spirit world. They must be powers that sustain the continuing growth and development of the human community. Appropriately enough, the symbolic focus is on the penis, which in the concrete image of the tmi palm, is plunged into the river, a medium of

fertility and rebirth in a socio-religious sense. But that is not all. These themes of symmetry and asymmetry in the exchange of sexual definitions draw attention to two final points. First, the tmi palm-as-symbolic penis conveys the idea of ritual antagonism and aggression: this variety of black palm is used as material in bow-making and bows are pre-eminently the weapons of war and the hunt. As I have stressed on previous occasions, ritualized antagonism is an appropriate setting for the exchange and transformation of supernatural powers, particularly powers of life and death. Secondly, the asymmetry in penis definitions suggests that the power of creation and re-creation will remain a spiritual attribute. Again, the tmi palm, also known as tmi kro, "black palm bone", conveys a sense of immortality, an essentially spiritual property.

In M_{1a} the story concludes with the exchange of penis definitions between the Drim of Graihei hamlet and the Dua (or Siokeidua, "wild pandanus fruit Dua") of Hutienai hamlet. Significantly, it is the penes of the Dua men which become larger. This mythic exchange which re-appears in various forms throughout the story has an important bearing on Aekyom social experience. As Appendix 3 shows, marriage exchanges between the Graihei Drim and Hutienai Dua are basically asymmetrical in character, a feature that also describes, to a significant extent, the marriage relationships between the Graihei Drim and either the Piduwenai Gre or Skikokei Gre. However, we also know that the rituals of marriage re-present asymmetrical exchanges as "first" or symmetrical but non-repetitive exchanges. To reiterate, the function of non-repetitive symmetrical exchange is to spiritually equalize marital statuses for the purposes of transmitting, acquiring and transforming supernatural, creative or re-creative powers. This extra-normal realm of experience is entered at the level of ritual and re-experienced through mythic symbolism. However, myth also provides a statement on the nature of multiple realities in Aekyom society. Repetitive, asymmetrical marriage exchanges institutionalize group definitions at a nominal level, thereby generating discontinuities in the human community. But these discontinuities are transcended by the bifurcation of reality which permits a re-integration of the human with the spirit worlds. As we have seen, these worlds may, on occasion, be

experienced as a unity through symbolic mediation which provides a source of meaning for "being in the world".

As a result, the myth both explains and legitimizes. It provides a charter for living in terms of extant orders and supporting institutions. However, this function is not absolute. Myth can also assert what is possible (potentialities), what is desirable (values) and what is probable (the constraints and limitations of society), thereby putting the world of myth in tension and conflict with the world as experienced and in the process pointing towards problem areas and ways of coping with them (Boas, 1938:610-611; Lévi-Strauss, 1967; Malinowski, 1948:113). These themes appear to characterize M_2 and M_3 which in their own ways further illuminate or provide interpretations of the symbolic messages communicated by M_1.

M_2 provides a more focussed look at the relation between birds and fish which in M_1 plays an important role in the differentiation and re-union of the Drim and Gre tongesu. At first glance, M_2 seems to have little to do with the cultural and religious issues deemed central to the constitution and definition of groups and group relations communicated by M_1. But as the story unfolds, the relevance of the bird and fish worlds and the nature of their interaction to the Aekyom community become increasingly apparent.

M_2 Why Birds Live in Trees

> The birds, skru, tinai, olu, tium and dianai were gathering derris root. They heaped the roots together in a pile and then asked, "Who is going to put the poison in the river?" Old man pigeon (skru) was sleeping near the ash box. He got up and went down to get the derris root. Then he flew up into the sky and when he was over the middle of the Fly River he dove down into the water with the poison. He then came up again. After he did that the fish slis, kwa, piowe and naeme came to the surface of the river and were swimming about, blinded by the poison. All the birds got into their canoes and started to kill the fish. When they had killed the fish the birds took their victims up to the house and proceed to hang the fish on the walls,

in the rafters and on sticks leaning against the walls outside the house. They cooked the small fish and ate them. However, feeling thirsty they told the women and children to fetch them some water. So the women and children got the water containers and went down to the well to fetch some water. But when the arrived at the well, the saw the fish sawei swimming about. He wore the sawei root in his ear. Sawei then motioned with his hand for all the fish to come out from behind the bush. Their faces were painted with charcaol which had come from the derris root poison. The women and children went back to the house and told the sleeping birds, "We saw sawei with the sawei root and bro war mallet." The birds woke up saying, "Oh really!" But as they were waking up, the dead fish in and around the house became men. They came down from the walls and began to chase the birds, trying to kill them. Some of the birds managed to escaped by flying up into the trees while others ran along the ground with the fish in pursuit. At the same time, old man Wi was squeezing the kwim and sapei pandanus fruits. Goura pigeon and bush turkey came running along and were surprised by Wi. Wi then got the juice of the kwim pandanus and painted the legs of goura pigeon red. He then got the juice of the sapei pandanus and painted the legs of bush turkey yellow. So that's the story of the birds. The birds were putting poison roots in the Fly River. It happened in the Fly River. The fish chased the birds and the birds flew up into the trees. The others ran on the ground.

There are three general themes in this myth which serve to guide the interpretation of its symbols. The first concerns the location of birds, a problematic issue suggested by the myth's title and confirmed by the text's details. The second theme relates to the role of plant juices in transforming identities. In particular the juices from the plants called kaiyokei (derris root), sawei (a thorny plant) and ko (pandanus) have supernatural powers that alter states of existence or redefine/transform identities. Finally, there is the dialectical relationship between birds and fish, a theme which is, perhaps, most readily recognized as relevant to the human condition where, during the birds' liminal experience of waking up, the fish resurrect as men.

The story begins with the birds preparing to poison the fish with the juice of the derris root, a milky liquid the Aekyom call dolei.

Given that fish occupy a spiritual environment below the water, it is striking that the verb huhunkwa, which means "to come to the water surface", implies a supernatural ascent. Huhunkwa may be broken down into the elementary linguistic units hu and kwa. While the suffix kwa means "infused with", the root hu connotes "supernatural powers". But when the fish do reach the water's surface, they are blind, a condition that neutralizes their spiritual condition in the context of communication modes, and places them firmly within a human setting. Indeed, like the birds who now collect the fish from canoes, they occupy "middle earth". This detail seems to set the stage from the events that follow.

The fish are taken back to the house in the bird community where they are either eaten or suspended from structures inside and outside the house. Curiously, women and children appear in the story at the precise moment when the birds have eaten the fish and developed a thirst. However, I would suggest that this symbolizes a reproductive theme which parallels the gastronomic implications of fish meat for male or agnatic identity. This interpretation is immediately confirmed by the encounter between the women and children and the bellicose fish, sawei.

Sawei, it appears, its the spiritual counterpart of old man pigeon vis-à-vis the issue of reproduction. This is suggested, first of all, by his location in the medium of rebirth: sawei is swimming ("walking")[4] about the water well. More specifically, several other mythic details cast sawei in the inverted image of skru's spirit double. Like skru who squeezes the kaiyokei root to release its "lethal" powers, sawei (in M_{2a}) squeezes the sawei plant to release a power which is concentrated at an aural level. Secondly, he does not speak to his companions in human language but motions with his hand for them to advance. Consistently, sawei's warriors seem to be a split representation of the fish initially "killed" by skru and his companions, and whose corpses are drapped in and about the birds' house. Indeed the warrior fishes' faces have turned black from the effects of the kaiyokei poison. Given the transformation

white "poison" ($\triangleq$ semen) $\Longrightarrow$ black charcoal ($\triangleq$ death)

in the spirit world, we may reaonsably expect a reversal of this theme in

the human world.

The women and children return to the house to warn the birds of sawei. However, judging by the birds' distinterested response or failure to prepare for "battle", there seems to be a failure in aural communication. This it seems is an effect of the supernatural powers of the sawei root which hangs from sawei's ear. Then, according to M_{2a}, as sawei and his war party approach but do not enter the birds' house, the dead fish return to life as humans precisely at the time the birds are waking from their transitional sleep. At this point, the union and differentiation of birds and fish in human space — i.e., middle earth — becomes the dominant theme in the story. Symbolically, the spiritual union of fish and birds in the context of gastronomic, sexual and aggressive themes prarallels the nature of the unity between the Drim and Gre who exchange fish meat or agnatic group definitions in M_1. Similar to the role of knikni which is to reduce ambiguity of group definitions and identity through the human-like act of nomination, the dispersal of birds in M_2 into the tree tops is tantamount to the differentiation of group identities in distinctively male or agnatic space (i.e., the "above"), a feature paralleled in the human world by nominal discontinuities among hamlet-based agnatic collectivities or tongesu.

Yet, it is not clear that this spatial separation (and its symbolic implications) represents a paramount value among the Aekyom. Indeed, there is a yearning expressed in the myth for some measure of re-integration between the bird and fish worlds, albeit in favour of "birdness". The myth asserts that this is a distinct possibility. As the story draws to a close, goura pigeon and bush turkey have escaped from the "fish" — men — by running along the ground on their legs. However, they run into the old man Wi who, interestingly enough, is squeezing juice from the pandanus fruits. As the first or ancestral Aekyom male, Wi reflects the symbolic properties of skru and sawei at the level of age categories — he is an old man — and at the level of supernatural activity — he is squeezing the juice from the pandanus fruit. Considered in the wider context of descent, pandanus juice is, like kaiyokei and sawei, an

animating principle that perpetuates categories of kin within the cycle of rebirth. Significantly, Wi applies pandanus juice as paint or a "second skin" to the legs of goura pigeon and bush turkey or to that aspect of bird anatomy which mediates the opposition between winged birds above and legless fish[5] below. It may reasonably be concluded then that goura pigeon and bush turkey, as ground birds, symbolize prototypical "birdness" or human descent categories, a point not overlooked in Aekyom marriage rites which conclude with the symbolic manipulation of the bush turkey.

Yet, despite the mythological value assigned to descent in M_2 as a principle of group definition and membership, other myths contend that it may be untempered, if not untenable, under the current constraints and limitations of social existence. These assumptions serve to guide my interpretation of the final myth considered in this thesis, which relates the articulation of human systems of marriage and descent.

M_3 The Origin of Marriage

In the beginning, dogs were "people" and they lived with women only. Women's husbands were dogs since no men lived with them. The dogs were having intercourse with the women but their children were females only. Women's husbands were dogs only. These dogs had no penis case, so they cut the grisi vine, put it around their waists and tied it to secure the penis. They didn't have penis cases to wear so they did it like that and stayed in the bush with their women. One day, the women were in the bush cutting the base roots of the kri tree with axes. The old man Wi was walking around in the bush and heard a sound (the sound of the axes striking the tree) but it sounded like cassowaries calling out. Wi searched the bush looking for the source of the sound. It sounded like cassowaries calling out. When he came near to the source of the sound, Wi put down his bow and arrows, went further along and then saw a woman standing as she struck the tree with an axe. She was very big and fat. Then Wi went down to her and asked, "Who are you?" The woman was startled to see Wi and she responded, "Who are you?" He replied, "I'm the old man Wi", then added, "You come to me." However, the

woman declined: "No, let me take you to my house." So off they went. But on the way the woman warned Wi, "When you see a dog sleeping on the verandah of the house [i.e., the male entrance to the house] you must not kick him; otherwise you will die — he will kill you and eat you. When he wags his tail, you talk to him." Finally, they came to the house and the dog was on the verandah wagging its tail. Wi talked to the dog and played with him. Then Wi went inside the house. The woman siad, "Come, sit by the inam [hole in the central partition, or irine]. Wi went in and saw ashes all over the floor of the utio [men's section of the house]. Some dogs were sitting by the ash box. Some were in the corners of the house while two large dogs were sitting inside the ash box facing one another. There were other large dogs sitting on black palm bark scattered on the floor. The woman said to Wi, "You sit down; don't kick the dogs away or hit them with a stick. If you do, there are many of them and they will kill you; they will drag you to the ground, rip out your stomach, eat your flesh and leave your bones there. No one would ever see you again." The dogs came up to Wi and tried to talk to him. Wi sat down and the dogs sniffed him and tried to talk to him. Meanwhile, the woman cooked some food, then passed it to Wi through the inam. After Wi had eaten she asked him, "Have you got any men?" Wi replied, "No, there is only me." So the woman said, "Sit down and listen, I'm going to talk. I want my daughter to pack up her things and go with you." Then she paused. "Sit down, wait, let me talk to my husband. Let everyone hear." So the woman went to talk to her husband, the dog. "We've got no men here; tell Wi that; see what he says; you talk to him. If he says yes, let's tell our daughter to pack up her things and marry him." Her husband the dog said to her, "We'll do that. Let's get our daughter whose breasts have matured. Let's decorate her and give her to Wi as his bride." The woman went back to Wi and said, "My daughter is waiting outside, near the house, and her father, the dog, told me that she can wait there for you. My husband is talking to you; he's not trying to play with you but he's telling you our daughter is to go outside the house and wait for you." Then the dog turned to his daughter: "My daughter, you will stay with your husband, Wi, and don't think about me. If you see my footprints in your husband's hamlet you must think, 'Oh, that's my father.' Don't say they are dog's footprints; say they are your father's; not a dog's but a man's. You tell your husband that we do not have intercourse face to face here. You go with Wi and see how he does it. We have intercourse from behind, the tail going up and down.

Stay with Wi, have intercourse and give brith to a boy. We never see boys or men. Give birth to a boy and make men for us. We only kill animals. Otherwise you'll stay here, marry a dog, have intercourse from behind and give birth to a girl only. Go, your husband, Wi, is wearing the penis case. Go and have frontal intercourse and make men. We've got no men here." Then the dog's wife said to Wi, "This big dog, my husband, is your uncle (aepua) and that girl is his daughter; my daughter, that's her father. When you go, don't do what my husband does; don't tie your penis with the grisi vine like my husband does. His testicles are naked at the back. And your uncle's penis is a strong one." Having said that she turned to her daughter and added, "Go and tell your husband, Wi, that your father's penis is very strong. Marry Wi, stay with him and give birth to a boy only; one that is not like us. Your father has intercourse with us from behind. We women are human but we are frightened. When we have intercourse with dogs their penes stick into us until we scream. Then they pull it out. Dogs hold on for a long time. Stay at your husband's place and give birth to a male human like your husband." Next, the girl's father, the dog, said, "Give birth to a boy, come back to us and take us to your house and feed us; we only kill pig and cassowary. You shout to us and we will kill these animals." So Wi and his bride went off to Wi's hamlet where she gave birth to a boy while the girl's father, the dog, stayed at his place. then the dog said to his wife, "Why did you tell Wi how dogs have intercourse? That is secret ["tei"], you must not say that. You cannot tell that in front of just anyone." Later the dog and his wife went to visit their daughter. The daughter's son [dog's grandson] was out hunting when they arrived at Wi's house. The dog was walking around the house looking for his daugher when his daugher's son came back to the house. So the dog went up to him, wagging its tail and sniffing him as dogs will do. But the boy tried to kick the dog on the nose; he tried to kick him out of the house. The dog got angry and bit the boy's leg, ripping out the flesh and leaving only the calf muscle [the calf muscle used to be continuous reaching to the heel]. He left the boy bleeding and in great pain, and returned to his house. Then he asked his daughter, "Why did you tell my secret to your husband? We were doing that secretly. Why did you tell your husband?" After he bit the boy, the dog tried to shout like a human but only barked like a dog. So the dog's daughter gave birth to men and now men are here. If men were still dogs we would not be like we are now. Men would have intercourse from behind only. Frontal intercourse is different to that.

By way of an introduction to M_3, the narrator, Hia, revealed an important totemic connection between the Aekyom and dogs which in terms of the vertical and lateral dimensions of kinship and marriage show some striking similarities and differences with other ancestral totemic figures. We are already familiar with the symbolic nature of totemic equations in the context of tongesu origin myths. Here I may refer again to Grawo's tale about the origin of Gre from pigs (see Appendix 2, M_7) and its relationship to M_1 and M_2. Pigs are not only important symbols of the Gre tongesu but also have symbolic affinities with birds, the most general symbolic category relevant to Aekyom cultural definitions of the tongesu. This is reflected, for example, in the Aekyom naming system. Dogs too are nominally linked to birds but with some important differences. Dog's names are, in a sense, incomplete reflections of "birdness" in contrast to those of humans and pigs which are cast in the full image of birds. It should follow then that dogs have symbolic value for tongesu definitions and membership but from a different perspective than that of direct transformation from an animal to a human group category. Indeed, no members of contemporary Aekyom tongesu claim the dog as an ancestral totem. But, according to Hia,

> Su hamo tia kei wo psaene ya deina no dinklei ho ko swa drinu sa tien klei swa ho ko nai tio da lite ["People used to say, 'You are born from a dog.' These words are true. They were told to me by my father too."]

These apparently conflicting symbolic themes which threaten the coherence of Aekyom notions of kinship and descent are taken up and discussed in M_3, whose task is to offer an interpretation of them.

The basis of the myth's interpretation rests on a more general theme which ties together aspects of kinship and descent with the issue of human language or speech as a distinctive and crucial indicator of human status. Stated more precisely, the problem which the myth constructs and then negates is that of "saying the unsayable". In formal terms, the myth addresses the dialectic between the principles of symmetry and asymmetry in language and society, and traces the implications of this relationship to the issue of descent and descent group status. In cultural terms, it explores the transformation of ancestral tei into descendant (i.e.,

historical, contemporary) tongesu, which is tantamount to the social reproduction of human groups. It is highly significant then that "saying the unsayable" relates to a "sexual secret" also called tei.

Although the story relates the origin of human marriage it is clear that other types of marriage are a focus of concern in the myth. It begins by describing the marital relationship between human females and dogs. Dogs were the spousesof human females and they all lived together in the bush. This suggests, first of all, that dogs and human females formed an endogamous community. But we may go further than this by inferring what type of marriage characterizes this community. As Lévi-Strauss (1966a:123) notes,

> ... restricted exchange ... is an imitation of endogamy within exogamy itself, for in restricted exchange groups consider themselves as closed to the outside and their internal exchanges double up on each other.

The myth seems to express these principles in the extreme along several interrelated dimensions. First, dogs represent a category of undifferentiated husbands, a situation that parallels symmetrical or "first" marriage exchanges in Aekyom myth and ritual where there is a fundamental equality of status between brothers-in-law. Second, as undifferentiated husbands, dogs are free to contract marriages that "double up on each other". Indeed, since no males are born to a dog and female human couple, the marriage prospects for a human daughter within the community must be to marry a category of husband that is at the same level as her dog-father. This symmetrical feature would also go some way toward explaining why the dog later discloses the "sexual secret" — already known to his wife — to his daughter and then castigates both his wife and daughter for revealing the secret to Wi, despite having been instructed by the dog to do so. And third, this endogamous community must be "closed to the outside" due not only to its isolated location in the bush but also to the fact that Wi, a male human, appears as a complete unknown or stranger to human females. These observations and inferences concerning the nature of this endogamous community raise two important and related questions: Why dogs? And why female humans?

It will be recalled that one of the most unusual characteristics of Aekyom dogs is their ambiguous status in the human community. For example, dogs are the only hamlet residents that may freely cross male-female boundaries within the hamlet house. Unlike pigs or adult humans, dogs have access to both the utio and the rine. Dogs are also marginal to the human condition at other levels, while dogs are valued for their hunting and killing skills. They are also devalued as hamlet co-residents being neither the commensual associates of human beings nor the recipients of human compassion. Not surprisingly, then the ambiguous qualities of the dog are symbolically projected at the level of myth in order to identify a category of being which also expresses a marginal or ambiguous relationship to human systems of kinship, marriage and descent.

This is demonstrated very clearly by the dog's capacity, as a non-human, to assume human social roles: i.e., the dog appears as a husband and father to female humans. Furthermore, in terms of these roles the dog parallels but does not duplicate male human status: rather than wear the penis case like male humans, the dog binds its penis with the grisi vine, a cultural modification that has interesting linguistic implications for idioms of kinship and descent. Grisi is also a term used to denote the smoking platform which elsewhere I have shown is associated with agantic status and fatherhood. However, if the dog in M_3 is not quite human, what is the nature of its non-human character? More importantly, what bearing do these non-human traits have on the kind of human status the dog attempts but fails to emulate in the story?

There are three general levels or modalities in terms of which the dog's non-human status or behaviour may be identified and defined. These include sociality, language and sexuality. Significantly, all three are interrelated and point towards a pre-eminently spiritual category.

At the level of sociality, dogs are above all else dangerous and aggressive beings. From the point of view particularly of human males, dogs represent death categories. They are either a potential or actual threat to human life. This theme is consistent with the main preoccupation

of dogs: the myth states quite clearly that they "only kill animals". Significantly, such activity may be successfully carried out only under spiritual conditions, a conclusion which may be drawn from the nature of Aekyom hunting and warfare. More importantly, the complementary and cultural act of cooking meat and distributing it for social consumption is confined to a hamlet community founded by human males and populated by humans only. As the myth states, the "dog community" is to be fed by the human community. Within their own community dogs also occupy a hamlet house. However, its general location is in the bush or rine where spirits also reside. More specifically, dogs either occupy house spaces that are spiritually "charged" or inundated with supernatural powers.[6]

The spiritual connotations of the dogs' location in physical space are paralleled by their linguistic position vis-à-vis humans. A principal feature of the myth is the nature of communication between dogs and humans. It is immediately apparent that dogs do not possess the faculty of human speech, a characteristic cited for spirit beings in M_1. Furthermore, there is no reciprocal exchange of meaningful conversation between the dogs and human males. The forms of communication in which dogs and human males participate are essentially asymmetric. Either Wi talks to the dogs or the dogs try to talk to Wi and Wi's son, but without success. The only way dogs and human males may communicate with one another is through human females who possess the faculty of human speech as well as the ability to talk to dogs in their own language. Yet it is precisely in terms of their bilingualism that human females "say the unsayable" by revealing the dog's "sexual secret" to Wi. Why should they do this? And why should the dog first encourage his daughter to reveal the secret to Wi, then chastise his wife and daughter for disseminating this information after the birth of the daugher's human son?

They key to these questions lies in the dual character of communication channels available to the dog in his encounters with human beings. In order to convey messages or "talk" to humans the dog may either wag its tail or employ its snout (i.e., nose + mouth). Either "linguistic form" seems appropriate to communication with human females.

However, this is decidedly not the case with human males. While tail wagging signals communication channels between dogs and male humans are open, the use or potential use of the dog's snout suggests they are closed. Indeed, the dog's snouth is the focus of repeated failures to communicate with or as male humans. On the one hand, dogs threaten the lives of human males with their mouths. On the other hand, attempts to communicate with or as male humans are either denied by male humans (the boy strikes the dog on the snout) or negated by the dog's own nature (he tries to shout like a human but only barks like a dog). Why then does tail wagging represent an open channel of communication between dogs and humans, male or female? And why does the boy block communication with his dog-grandfather who retaliates by tearing the flesh from his grandson's leg, leaving him bloody and in pain? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to shift frames of reference and focus on the symbolic implications of tail wagging at the level of sexuality and reproduction. As we shall see, the status of the dog's tail in the context of "sexual communication" has an important bearing on the circumstances under which the dog's "secret" or tei is revealed to human males.

There is no question that the dog's tail wagging symbolizes a distinctively non-human method of sexual intercourse. The dog points out to his daughter that dogs "have intercourse from behind, the tail going up and down". Furthermore, the dog-father states that this method of intercourse differs from that among male humans who have intercourse face to face. It is not unreasonable to argue then that the dog's tail symbolizes anal intercourse. If this is the dog's secret, what interest does the dog have in ambiguously revealing and concealing it, through his daughter, in Wi's presence? Or, in what sense is anal intercourse of mutual interest to the dog and Wi?

As the myth states, "intercourse from behind" has important implications for group composition, marriage forms and the type of group reproduced. Significantly, the union of dogs and female humans reproduce only female human children. As a result, the dogs' daughters must marry symmetrically, which leads to the sexual reproduction of a

similar, ambigous human/non-human community or group. Yet it is clear that certain aspects of this ambiguity are not acceptable to either the dog or his human wife. Reduction of group ambiguity is sought through the mechanism of asymmetrical cross cousin marriage — we are told in fact that the dog is Wi's maternal uncle or aepua who gives his daughter to Wi in marriage. Asymmetrical marriage, together with "frontal intercourse" will result in the reproduction of male humans and therefore in the reproduction of homogeneous male (i.e., agnatic) groups or communities. Yet the dog also wishes, in some sense, male heirs: he says to his daughter, "Make men for use." This imperative raises an obvious question: What justification does the dog have to claim a male human as a member of his group or community? More specifically, why is the dog interested in recruiting his grandson to his group?

Let us return to the opposition between anal and frontal (i.e., vaginal) intercourse in order to answer these questions. This reversal in methods of sexual intercourse separates non-human from human males. Put another way, different methods of sexual intercourse draw attention to the supernatural and cultural statuses of males who perform them. More generally, however, these categories are dialectically opposed along gustatory, culinary, kinship and cosmic dimensions, themes that both underly M_3 and provide principles that define Aekyom descent categories. Here, for example, elements of death and excrement stand in dialectical opposition to elements of life, meat and blood in the consitution of the tongesu as a category of descent. It should follow then that anal and vaginal intercourse, as inverted forms of sexual intercourse, play complementary roles in the reproduction of the tongesu. This proposition is, first of all, confirmed at the level of language. The phrase for "frontal intercourse" is duwe dima, which means "to give birth in front"; "intercourse from the back", however, may be expressed in one of a number of ways. For example, in M_3 it is covered by the phrase ri gite — "the side of the bird of paradise", koprum gite tentaemi — "intercourse behind spread legs" or tongite tentaemi — "intercourse from the backside". Significantly, tongite may be substituted by the word tonge, which is also an element of ditonge or "anus" and tongesu, a male descent

category. It is highly appropriate then that this linguistic evidence informs an interpretation of the secret or tei that cannot but must be told.

As a kinship form, tei, like the secret with which it is linguistically identified, is an ambiguous ancestral category. Now, while the ambiguity of tei may be reduced by either cultural or supernatural transformations, both cultural and supernatural categories participate in a dialectical relationship that reconstitutes the tei as an historical or contemporary descent category, namely and nominally, the tongesu. As we have seen, male rebirth or the re-establishment of agnatic connections between males consolidates the tongesu as a male descent category. However, this process is predicated on matrilateral relations and forms of marriage with complementary structural implications for descent group membership. It follows then that both the dog and Wi may legitimately but equivocally claim the dog's grandson/Wi's son as a member of their respective descent communities. Indeed, while the boy identifies with his father's group in terms of their mutual "humanness", he also identifies with his dog-grandfather in terms of ritual or spiritual states: when the dog arrives at his grandson's hamlet, the latter is out hunting and presumably killing animals. However, the onus is clearly on the boy to reduce this ambiguous identification. He does this by obstructing a potential channel of communication between humans and supernatural beings that, if left "open", would otherwise permit the dog to redefine its relationship to his grandson in more direct and human terms. So the boy hits the dog on the snout, an act that once and for all denies the dog the power to usurp the cultural prerogative of human speech. Yet as the myth concludes it is also apparent that the boy's complete identification with cultural human ancestors is far from secure. Significantly, the myth focuses on that aspect of anatomy that relates the avian image of agnatic status to categories of descent; viz the legs (see M_2). Paralleling the dog's footprint, which is an inpcomplete and false representation of a male human kinship status, the removal of flesh (= meat) from the boy's leg represents a partial severing of his link with human agnates and, therefore, constitutes a real threat to the cultural integrity and continuity of the tongesu as a caegory of human descent (cf. Jackson, 1979:122-126).

Summary

The principal aim of this chapter is to discuss the nature of myth and the manner of its reflection on issues of group definitions, structure and interrelations. Beginning with a religious perspective on these matters, controversial views on the status of religious orders in New Guinea are discussed and then placed within a broader philosophical context that posits indeterminancy as a critical aspect of the human condition. On the basis of this assumption, Aekyom mythology is seen as one type of model that may be used to address the question of what it means to be human in Aekyom society.

The study of myth begins with a brief comment on the status of myth as a category of Aekyom language. Here linguistic considerations serve to distinguish myth from other categories of narrative and lead to the conclusion that Aekyom mythology projects a diachronic vision of the human condition. From this vantage point, an overview of the nature of myth, inspired by the writings of Franz Boas, is presented and then brought to bear on a critical assessment of structuralist approaches to the study of myth. In this context, the works of both Boas and Lévi-Strauss are considered to be incomplete since they fail to consider the range of perspectives in terms of which the mythic vision of the human condition emerges. This substantive and theoretical omission leads to a focus on the issue of multiple realities in Aekyom society and the role of the symbol as a mechansim for their integration. With its frame of reference firmly placed within the extra-normal realm, myth is seen to accommodate symbols but with a view to their interpretation. As a result, Aekyom views on the human condition are expressed in a number of narratives that provide symbolic interpretations of kinship ancestries, totemic affiliations and marriage forms.

The first myth provides an interpretation of the symbolic significance of group names and in particular the structural implications of their ambiguity for categories of descent. As reflections of the principles of reciprocity and complementarity between bilateral or affinal

relatives, group names are seen as emerging within a context of reciprocal action between males which over time alternately articulates and undermines the cultural coherence and continuity of agnatic groups as named groups. These dialectical principles are then traced to the completion of agnatic group identity in the context of human encounters with the spirit world. Here principles of symmetry and asymmetry alternately facilitate the transfer of sexual power to the human community for the purposes of growth, development and renewal, and differentiate the latter from the spirit world in cultural terms. At the level of social existence, then, this myth provides a frame of reference for a more profound sense and understanding of the experiences circumscribed by bilateral and affinal relations, especially in relation to the social reproduction of groups.

In M_2, the issue of reproduction and the renewal of human groups from supernatural sources is discussed in the same totemic terms that serve to define and redefine group identities in M_1. However, this time the link between birds and fish is more direct and subject to further reflection. Again it is the interaction between birds and fish that perpetuate categories of kin within a cycle of rebirth. Yet the myth clearly questions the value of agnatic kin categories, represented by the spatial separation of the birds from the fish, as the only type of kin category in Aekyom society. Indeed, the myth speculates on the reintegration of the bird and fish worlds or their properties as a more permanent social arrangement. This is symbolized, appropriately enough, through the concrete image of ambiguous ground birds. As a result, the myth concludes that male descent groups, although ambiguous, are both desirable and possible social formations in Aekyom society.

However, M_3 challenges the validity of this conclusion through a more extended treatment of the issue of descent and the status of descent group categories in Aekyom society. The difficulties of consolidating male descent groups that cross cut separate male communities are discussed in the context of alternative forms of marriage exchange and their relationship to the process of descent. The myth focuses on the ambiguity

of tei, an original kinship category and "sexual secret", which is reduced through the mechanisms of symmetrical and asymmetrical forms of marriage exchange but elaborated as a descent construct. Re-expressed as inverted forms of sexual behaviour, these marriage strategies are seen as complementary modes of exchange that perpetuate agnatic kin categories. The independence and primacy of these cultural categories vis-à-vis the spirit world are presented as prerequisities for the articulation of agnatic relations in the human community. However, the necessity to reproduce agnatic relations draws the human community into an indissoluable relationship with the spirit world. In this context, the latent and manifest antagonisms between different male communities "allied" by asymmetrical marriage provide the conditions for the transformation of reproductive powers and stipulates the tenuous character of either unilineal or bilateral descent categories which are, nevertheless, its structural entailments.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Alfred Gell (1975:43-45) has suggested that the structuring of societies in New Guinea may conform to either one of two possible conceptual models based on one of two possible types of constructs which have their origin and context in relations of 'descent' or relations of 'alliance'. For Gell, the definitive property of a 'descent construct' is the social relation between same-sex siblings (calculated ultimately from pre-parental antecedents), while 'alliance constructs' are distinguished in terms of the relation between cross-sex siblings together with marriage exchange. Recently, Scheffler (1985) has refined and developed the Fortesian notions of 'descent' and 'filiation' and examined their implications for the status of group affiliation and the structuring of societies in New Guinea. On the basis of these conceptual distinctions he concludes that most (Highland) New Guinea societies should not and theoretically cannot be described in terms of the "language of descent". Rather, the appropriate terminology for most New Guinea social formations in this context is said to be derived from the "language of kinship". Thus the conceptual model in question is not presumed to be based on 'descent' where common ancestry entails jural constraints on group membership, and the structuring of the group's internal and external relations as an instrumental unit. For Scheffler, the structuring of most (Highland) New Guinea societies conforms to a model of paternal or fraternal kinship. Technically, this feature is also recognized by Gell, although he phrases it in terms of "descent". However, unlike Scheffler, Gell adds that marriage exchange may, in addition to kinship, be an important structural component in the conceptualization of the total society in some areas of New Guinea. Curiously then Gell does not explore the relationship between kinship and marriage as an element of descent in Umeda society despite his interest in descent themes at the level of ritual action and symbolism. If we assume a broader definition of "descent" than that proposed by Scheffler (or Gell) for New Guinea societies, which theoretically relates natural, cutlural and supernatural categories, it may reasonably be argued that the nature of 'descent' among the Umeda is

expressed in the ida fertility ritual. Indeed, Gell (1975:156) suggests that

> ... it sometimes seems as if, in ida, a dramatic re-creation is set in motion of the entire cosmos as it is constituted in Umeda experience, and interpreted in Umeda cultural categories.

Here the values of reproduction are confirmed through the symbolic re-enactment of the life cycle as it pertains to the succession of male generations. Now, while Gell (1975:76-77) agrees with Scheffler's (1985:9) and therefore Fortes' (1953, 1959) conclusion that the integrity and viability of a descent group is preserved through group closure and separation, it is not always clear that this is the way the Umeda themselves conceptualize the nature of their descent groups. On the one hand, Gell (1975:43) argues that at the level of moiety organization, Umeda conceptualizations of the social world are premised on a relation of complementary opposition between discrete agnatic descent groups allied via marriage exchange. Yet,

> When given expression in ritual action ... this conceptually asymmetric relation (ego/alter, in-group/out-group...) is rephrased as a symmetric opposition of identical and equal halves of the total society (Gell, 1975:44; my emphasis).

This combination of conceptual symmetry and asymmetry suggests a familiar ambiguity in the formation and representation of descent configurations and group structure in New Guinea. Pouwer (1960) for example, has argued that New Guinea societies tend towards ambilateral descent while cherishing, more or less, patrilineal values. This seems to be especially the case where symmetric and asymmetric forms of marriage exchange coexist (e.g., Van der Leeden, 1960). Pouwer has been criticized either directly or indirectly for overlooking the existence of apparently discrete unilineal agnatic descent groups (e.g., Gell, 1975:75) or for falling prey to the illusion of "flexible patrilineal descent groups" created by the reality of fluctuating patrifilial recruitment to local, territorially based groups (Scheffler, 1985:3). However, I would be prepared to argue that Pouwer's position on the nature of some New Guinea descent configurations, while perhaps poorly phrased, does appeal to a more subtle and ambiguous property of social structures in New Guinea. On the basis of the data and arguments presented in the present thesis,

the Aekyom ethnography may prove to be of some use in discussions of these matters and other related issues.

Throughout this thesis I have tried to demonstrate how an investigation of different levels of society and culture, including social classification, marriage exchange, ritual, nomination, totemism and myth can contribute to a more complete interpretation of Aekyom descent and group formation, and in the process highlight the recurrent theme of structural ambiguity as well as the underlying dialectical principles of organization. In this task, I have found it fruitful to regard "descent constructs" and "alliance constructs" as inseparable components of a more inclusive conceptual model of society. For example, I began with the observation that Aekyom kinship groups may be defined at the level of hamlet organization. In this context, male agnates form the core around which the wider hamlet membership coalesces. However, the separation of the core agnatic group from the remaining hamlet membership is effected and maintained on the basis of two important distinctions. First, it is distinguished by its status as a property-holding unit with ultimate control over resources within the boundaries of a culturally recognized hamlet territory. And second, it is culturally differentiated from other similar units as a named tongesu. These distinctions have several important implications for the conditions under which claims to membership in local agnatic groups may be legitimated.

As a jural entity, the local tongesu is not open to infiltration by "outsiders" (e.g., matrikin) since genealogical pedigrees cannot be substituted, for purposes of individual recruitment to groups, by such contingencies as economic or political expediency. The only permitted leeway in the adherence to social groups is through adoption involving "first born" bilateral kin or affinal relatives. In this case, relevant genealogies are not concealed or manipulated since assimilation to the group or tongesu in question is achieved through the acquisition of a tongesu name. However, as we have seen under other circumstances, possession of a common name does not necessarily imply agnatic status in a localized tongesu. The critical criteria are common residence in a hamlet

territory combined with a common ancestry which is documented by totemic origin myths. These myths constitute statements about agnatic continuity or the reproduction of agnatic kinsihp relations which are phrased in terms of an indigenous theory of descent. This theory, which may be interpreted in Aekyom natural, cultural and supernatural categories, is based on principles of bilateral kinship and marriage exchange whose articulation in terms of a dialectical logic not only highlights the complementary roles of forms of kinship (agnatic, maternal) and forms of marriage exchange (symmetrical, asymmetrical) in the formation of instrumental and expressive groups, but also defines and sustains the integrity and coherence of a tongesu as a pre-eminently religious conception.

Thus the possession of common personal names, made possible through structured modes of name transmission and acquisition, constitutes a reification of common totemic ancestry which, in contrast to significant genealogical connections that apply to the definition of localized tongesu as agnatic kinship groups, are the crucial criteria for common membership in a tongesu as a descent configuration. However, it is also clear that certain values such as agnatic (kinship) or ambilateral (descent) that might be assigned to these alternative social arrangements do not forestall or resolve the on-going process and tension between the forms of kinship and descent in Aekyom society.

APPENDIX 1.

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes to Chapter 2.

1. Until 1969, two Aekyom-speaking villages were situated on the banks of the Middle Fly River near the mouth of Suki Creek. In 1969, the people of Tererama and Kawatanga villages paddled up the Fly River to re-settle in Aekyom territory. The younger generations of these two villages had grown up speaking Suki, but the old people could still remember their own language — i.e., Aekyom (P. Swadling, personal communication).

2. The term 'Awin', which most frequently appears in the published literature, is a Yonggom term used by the latter to refer to Aekyom-speaking people. In turn, the Aekyom refer to the Yonggom as "Gome", meaning "short". In contrast, Pare speakers refer to the Aekyom as "Iyame" or "People who eat the long banana called aiyame". As far as I know, Aekyom refer to this group by the term 'Pare' only.

3. Unfortunately, I was unable to record Pare migration histories or clan origin myths, which might lend some support to these suggestions.

4. Most Papua New Guineans from outside the OK Tedi Area, as well as ex-patriots and foreigners are employed by either OK Tedi Mining Limited or Bechtel Construction Company in connection with mineral industrialization (gold and copper mining) concentrated at Mt. Fubilan in the Star Mountains. The Kiunga police force consists of nationals from outside the OK Tedi Area; Christian missions are run by French Canadians (Montfort Catholic Mission) and Australians and New Zealanders (Asia Pacific Christian Mission, Evangelical Church of Papua) and also include some American staff. Administrative posts are staffed by ex-patriot Australians, British, and Papua New Guineans from outside the OK Tedi Area.

5. Prior to the village councillor programme, native constables were introduced to village level political organization. However, their impact on political affairs was minimal and they were withdrawn by the Australian colonial administration shortly after their introduction.

6. Formally, taxes are levelled at K6 (6 kina) per adult male per year. In practice, the collection of taxes is contingent on the ability to pay since little cash circulates in Aekyom villages. Nevertheless, taxes are almost invariably seen by the Aekyom in terms of purchasing power.

7. According to my informants, white-skinned Europeans were initially considered by the Aekyom to be "ghosts" or spirits.

8. In previous years, only a few Aekyom (usually men) situated near the banks of major rivers had been contacted by Europeans. As Map 3 indicates, Drimgas was "originally" a hamlet located a considerable distance in the interior of what is now East Awin census division.

9. At times, religious competition has assumed acrimonious dimensions. See Prince and Prince, 1981; Patrol Reports, 1971/72, 1973/74.

10. The APCM and MCM operate hospitals in Rumginae and Kiunga, respectively as well as a number of primary schools throughout the Awin census divisions.

11. While cases of "true" religious conversion seem undeniable, material interests in combination with interests in the retention of traditional lifesetyles, especially in East Awin, are paramount criteria for the acceptance or rejection of Western religious, at least among my informants. As one experienced patrol officer wryly commented on the occasion of the MCM's inauguration of the Matkamnai church (West Awin) that included a feast featuring a 400 lb. steer, "There was an enormous turnout, being either a great show of faith or a craving for fresh meat". In other situations, Saturday worship, as practiced by the SDA, was used by the Aekyom as an excuse not to unload visiting government boats (or "rivertrucks"). Somewhat blasphemous was the "symbolic" meaning of the Catholic sign of the cross, secretly conveyed to me by several informants: the points of the cross were associated, in succession, with tinned fish, rice, laplaps and (commercial) tobacco, signs of European presence and presents. There are, of course, other reasons for less than total

commitment to or faithful renderings of the new relgious or their symbols. Some sects, like the APCM and SDA, ban the smoking of tobacco, a highly valued and nearly universal practice among Aekyom men, women and even small children. Furthermore, the SDA, noted in particular for its "worship or burn" brand of evangelization, does not permit the eating of such foods as pork, (scaleless) fish, turtles and prawns, all of which are Aekyom delicacies. All current and former "adherents" to the SDA faith that I met continued to eat these foods with great relish and little guilt. More importantly, most had "retired" from the faith altogether. The most pernicious, from the local point of view, is unquestionably the Jehova's Witnesses. Like the SDA, this group warns of "eternal damnation" for non-believers (aetheists) but goes one step further by "predicting" the end of the world. This has had, in the past, a disturbing effect on some local people. For example, some Aekyom men nervously approached administration officials for confirmation of imminent disaster. Consequently the Aekyom soon became suspicious of the sect's intentions. However, other attempts at religious interference in Aekyom beliefs and practices have been unevenly rebuffed. In some areas, APCM and SDA condemnation of male initiation rites and ceremonial dance as "traditional customs of sin" have led to their abandonment. The Montfort Catholic Mission, on the other hand, is remarkably tolerant of indigenous religious beliefs and practices and in some instances has shown enthusiasm for their promotion and support.

12. See Peters (1956) for more detailed information on malarial and related conditions in the southern Aekyom region.

13. Much to my surprise, pneumonia is the most frequent ailment contributing to the death of Aekyom and other OK Tedi Area infants (Colin Robinson, personal communication).

14. During the latter part of my fieldwork, construction on a road from Kiunga to Drimgas had begun.

15. A significant proportion of medical funds are allocated for emergency

purposes in the most remote areas, accessible only by helicopter or, where there is an air strip, by light planes.

16. Significantly, the death of Aekyom patients while in hospital tends to reinforce the general reluctance of the population to seek its services. As one patrol officer commented, "When I asked the Aekyom of Gusiore why they do not take their sick to the hospital in Kiunga, some replied that they believed the medicine would kill them like it had a woman in the recent past."

17. During my stay in the field, I was aware of the deaths of 3 out of 4 babies born in traditional birth huts. All 3 mothers survived. In addition, since I judged the matter too sensitive, I never broached the topic of infanticide among my informants. However, some patrol reports record cases of infanticide, but with a minimum of detail.

18. Equally important, one of the conditions of acceptance of my presence among them was to record myths and histories for their benefit. One aspect of this work has already been completed (Depew; 1982). A more complete collection of oral tradition is in preparation.

19. The Fly River in general is characterized by changing configurations and by rapid and significant changes in the water level. Extreme variations of the order of 30 feet can occur at Kiunga.

20. Wai duo includes the Palmer River and the Fly River to the south of Palmer junction. The section of the Fly River which extends beyond Palmer junction and into the mountains is called by Aekyom wai priangei. Significantly, the fecundity and reproductive powers of rivers are expressed mythically as a source of edible vegetable matter (e.g., pandanus fruit) or are linked to the symbolism of birth and rebirth.

21. It appears the Olsobip was an important settlement on a major trade route between mountain and lowland cultures. This route, which runs parallel to the Fly River as it flows from the mountains into the lowlands,

passes through the Faiwolmin village of Kaiangabip to the Aekyom hamlet of Srike (Gurumo) and then on to the North Awin settlement of present day Runai village. Although this route was known to exist by administrtors for some time, it was first patrolled and mapped as late as 1975. According to the subsequent patrol reports, Aekyom cultural influence extends as far as Kaiangabip (Patrol Reports, 1974/75; cf. Barth, 1971:174-175; see also below).

22. Barth (1982:4) notes that steel axes were intorduced to the Min circa 1945. Although Alice River Aekyom seem to have acquired poor quality steel axes from Malay bird of paradise hunters, perhaps as early as the 19th century (Austen, 1922), some Palmer River Aekyom may not have acquired them until 1947.

23. "Tik tik" is the pidgin English term for a type of wild sugar cane (Sassarum spp.) whose stalk is used as an arrow shaft as well as a source of food, being chewed especially by children. There is no generic term for "arrowhead": each type of arrowhead is given a speciific name derived from its material or function (i.e., intended game). The entire arrow is referred to as aepine or kapune.

24. The first trade store in Kiunga was established in 1969 by the Evangelical Church of Papua. It is called "Pasuwe", an abbreviation of Papuan Supply and Welfare".

25. Krule is named after a type of tree whose bark is used in the manufacture of the container.

26. Larger canoes require group – traditionally hamlet and inter-hamlet, today village – cooperation in the manufacturing process. No less than 5 men may work together in making a canoe while a mixed audience of men, women and children look on, prepare food and in general enjoy the outing.

27. Having fallen out of these canoes a number of times, I was somewhat amazed (and amused) to see "expert canoeists" do the same, although

under more difficult conditions of fast flowing water etc. In general, men stand as they paddle, while women sit. However, when not accompanied by men, women often stand to paddle.

28. Austen (1923:345) was also of the opinion that the Aekyom are better adapted to life inland. Regarding their canoe craftsmanship, he adds (perhaps ethnocentrically?), "I never saw a properly made paddle: they use a stick, 4 to 5 feet long with a piece of bark about a foot square in one end" (cf. Champion, 1931:21). Today, canoe paddles (sule) resemble those of Western design and are fairly well made.

29. Today, many males prefer to wear cotton shorts which may be traced to the Kiunga trade stores. However, males of all ages may also wear only the penis case.

30. Many of these practices have been either discontinued or only occasionally observed.

31. Barth (1975:72-74) describes a similar but more elaborate treatment of the hair among fourth degree Baktaman novices.

32. The term "woven" is slightly inaccurate. Technically, the operation may be described as "knotless netting" (M. Mackenzie, personal communication).

33. Prior to sustained contact and government control, arrowheads were also made from the bones of the enemy dead, usually sections of the ulna or radius. Small boys make arrows from the mid-rib of a sago leaf. These are sharpened at one end and tipped with the vertebra (dipo) of a snake or monitor lizard. Their bows are about 3' to 4' in length and are made from the wood of the tansu palm. The bowstring (ku) is made from rattan, in contrast to the men's which is made from split bamboo.

34. Varieties of sago (Metroxylon) exploited by the Aekyom may be classified with Eumetroxylon, which includes M. rumphii and M. sagus.

Both species appear with or without thorns (Barrau, 1959:152-154).

35. Barrau (1959:155) comments that some Papuans occasionally remove the bud to prevent inflorescene and subsequent exhaustion of the starch reserves.

36. Barrau (1959:152) describes the sago grub as the immature or larval stage of a weevil that attacks the sago palm. It is not, therefore, according to Western entomology, the offspring of a species of fly, as the Aekyom maintain.

37. This figure dropped considerably during the severe drought in the final few months of my fieldwork. As swamps had dried up, the only option was to process sago by the Fly River or its larger tributaries which required much effort to transport the sago pith from the gardens, many miles to rivers and creeks.

38. With the advent of government villages, this pattern has changed somewhat. Gardens associated with village houses tend to be much smaller and/or more distant from the settlement.

39. Aekyom hunters have been killed pursuing bush pigs while others bear the scars and broken limbs of close encounters.

40. Most adult domestic pigs owned by Drimgas residents were kept in a hamlet a mile or two from the village under the encouragement of administrators and health officials for sanitary reasons. However, piglets often share living quarters with their human mistresses.

41. Similar to other New Guinea societies, Aekyom do not classify the cassowary as a bird (see Bulmer, 1967; Gardner, 1984; Herdt, 1981).

42. During my fieldwork, an immature cassowary had managed to escape its pen and inflict a minor wound on a young boy's arm with its claws. However, more serious attacks have been known to occur among the

Aekyom which parallel those recorded for other New Guinea societies (e.g., Gilliard, 1953).

43. For 1981-82, the ratio of shotguns to residents in Drimgas was 1:72. This is likely to fluctuate at any given time since shotgun permits, issued by the administration in Kiunga, cost K30 /year. Since money is scarce and wage labour even more so, permits may lapse and therefore affect the number of shotguns in use by Drimgas men over the years. Equally problematic for most Drimgas men is the inital outlay of up to K100 for the weapon itself.

44. The four-pronged arrowhead called yarlongei or buntien is used for this purpose. Quite often, Aekyom youths use a spear made from a long, thin, pointed metal shaft and fixed by an attached strip of elasticized rubber. This instrument, similar to those found elsewhere in Papua New Guinea, is of recent introduction.

45. Puppies too are the focus of positive human sentiment, but unlike piglets, they are usually left to fend for themselves.

46. As a relationship term, kiguam denotes males of the second ascending terminological level, and is distinguished from the terms angei, gmore which all Aekyom use as terms of reference/address for elder or younger brother, respectively. The connections between kiguam, angei and gmore are examined in greater detail in Chapter 4.

47. Barth (1982:55) notes the "... extreme acceptance of external authority and leadership that is widespread among ..." the Faiwol. "Warren Dutton tells how a local leader, shortly after first contact, wished to tell him all the local customs so Dutton could say which they had to discard and which they could retain in the new life they were entering."

48. Indeed, it is not unusual to find Aekyom who claim membership in two culturally distinct groups. One member of the Somi "clan", for example, after relating his "clan" history claimed both Faiwol ancestry as well as

current Yonggom identity. In the village of Drimskai statements that members of the Drim "clan" are "really Min" were frequently voiced.

49. In contrast to Highland "traders" (Strathern, 1971) or participants in the Massim Kula (Malinowski, 1922; Leach and Leach, 1980) Aekyom traders were not committed to any particular exchange relationship when it involved the transfer of material goods. For example, Aekyom of Saisu considered Olsobip as a whole to be a general source of both partners and goods, the former fluctuating with the demand for the latter.

50. Some Fly River Aekyom have been involved in indentured labour, while more recent entrepreneurial activity, directly by Mr. Kala Swokin, a Fly River Aekyom and current (1982) Minister for Urban Development in the Papua New Guinea national government, has diversified the economic experiences of Aekyom living in Kiunga's "corners". But these "modern" ventures are an exception and largely peripheral to subsistence activities that predominate in the villages and garden hamlets.

Footnotes to Chapter 3.

1. Welsch (1979:5) suggests that the Aekyom in South Awin "... had incipient nucleated hamlets ..." at the time of European contact. This conclusion, however, is based on Austen's (1923:336) vague use of the term "village", and it is not clear from Austen's text in what sense they are "incipient" or "nucleated". Nevertheless, Welsch correctly opposes Aekyom settlement patterns to the "individual, dispersed houses" among the neighbouring Ningerum and northerly/westerly Yonggom (cf. Welsch, 1983).

2. Centralized villages have, unfortunately, isolated many people from their traditional hunting and fishing territories and hamlet gardens. As a result, some village residents are sometimes accused of or admit to "poaching" on lands more closely situated to the village site but owned by other residents. These occurrences, however, are usually linked to "misunderstandings" or situations of food scarcity etc.

3. The only recorded statistics (known to me) on birth and death rates are irregular, unsystematic, and seemingly inconsistent. As recorded by local officials, they include the following figures:

Year	Census Division	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Natural Decrease	Natural Increase
1971	North Awin	3.71/100	4.01/100	.3%/yr.	
1972	North Awin	3.69/100	4.00/100	.3%/yr.	
1974	South Awin	4.25/100	2.47/100		1.8%/yr.

Demographic data were also compiled over a 3-year period for North Awin and summarized in 1963. These include 230 registered births and 139 registered deaths, with a natural increase of 3.4%/yr. Needless to say, the available demographic statistics are illustrative and not definitive of possible fluctuations in the Aekyom population in selected areas.

4. Drimgas village, for example, consists of the population of nine

hamlets. Given a population (in 1982) of 224, the mean persons/hamlet would be approximately 25. See below.

5. Morphemically, aewe consists of ae, a "transitional" prefix and we, a locative suffix. In addition to house, aewe also denotes the womb, often referred to by Aekyom as tia aewe, or "child's house". See below and Chapter 4.

6. Most centralized village sites have few standing trees that could be used as a central foundation post.

7. There may be several such holes in the partition that correspond to individual "family hearths". Individual wives within the house often prefer to use separate fire places to cook food for their respective families (gile). At other times, fireplaces may be shared by several families.

8. The bachelors' house may be located in hamlet territory where male initiations have taken place or will take place in the future. The name of the house is derived from k'waten, which means literally "readying" or "preparing" (to become). Phonetically, it is almost indistinguishable from kwaten, "male youth". "Readying" is a reference to both male initiation and marriage.

9. Under administration and mission influence some aewe are not constructed with a central partition. Consequently, the distinctions between rine and utio may become blurred. When this occurs men and women may "stray" into one another's traditional space. However, even in the absence of physical barriers between them, men and women tend to respect the traditional separation of the sexes in the house by occupying separate quarters. Where houses have assumed more modern or Western designs with a number of separate rooms, such divisions between the sexes may be facilitated.

10. Austen (1923:343) states that among the Alice River Aekyom "Garden and hunting shelters are built about 2 or 4 feet above the level of the

ground and both have susepended fire places." I did not observe elevated hunting houses among the Fly River Aekyom, nor did my informants say they ever built them above ground. However, raised garden shelters, as described by Austen, were fairly common in the area of my field site.

11. Today, centralized villages are known by the names of hamlets that provide land for village sites.

12. The ambiguity of totemic ancestry within the tongesu may also be observed at the local hamlet level. For example, I was told that the totemic ancestor of the Somi tongesu of present day Runai village is the white cockatoo. However, Somi members also claim that they were born from the python called ware as were all other Aekyom. This apparent contradiction in totemic ancestry occasioned neither further comment nor concern among my informants.

13. During the period of my fieldwork no hamlet owning groups had died out. However, according to my informants, this has happened in the past with the consequences as described in the text.

14. I recorded one case of homicide while in the field that involved the "unlawful" appropriation of an elder brother's catch of fish by a younger brother. The latter was thereupon dispatched by the former. However, this case did not involve crucial issues of succession to title.

15. The possessives nai and aenai indicate "ownership".

16. During my fieldwork period, a male member of the Somi tongesu resident in Drimgas village became the owner of a section of sago garden land whose ownership title was transferred to him by his Gasei brother-in-law. I found no mythic or contemporary evidence for the transferrence of land between different hamlet-owning groups sharing the same tongesu name.

17. Prior to sustained contact, hamlet houses and garden shelters were

sometimes burned to the ground during warfare. While I was in the field, one family found it necessary to leave their house as it had become infested with cockroaches.

18. This involved the use of a commerical fish net by one man in the absence of its owner. It seems that economic necessity was the prime motive for this transgression.

19. For girls, their contribution to sago production becomes significant around the ages of 9 or 10, the ideal age of marriage for females, especially prior to sustained contact. The boys' contribution, on the other hand, is not really significant until they are able to contract a marriage, usually by their mid-20s. Most bachelors (kwaten knu) prior to sustained contact, spent their time hunting, preparing for war, and occasionally gardening.

20. "Security circle" is an analytical, not ethnographic, category insofar as there is no Aekyom term to describe it.

21. Traditionally, Aekyom stage pig feasts and initiation rites which usually involve gatherings of up to 300 people or more from neighbouring hamlets. Such gatherings, however, are more like aggregates than all-encompassing politico-ritual associations. Participation in pig feasts, for example, depends upon indvidual social ties between members of various hamlets rather than on any sense of (permanent) regional cohesion.

22. The Aekyom themselves refer to these associations as involving people "who share land" and apply agnatic terms of relationship (e.g., "brothers", "sisters") when addressing individual "bush associates". In order to avoid possible confusions or repetitious clarifications I prefer to use the terms "bush association" and "bush associate" in this context.

23. Members of distinct localized tongesu who do share a tongesu name refer to one another through the use of agnatic relationship terms. This applies across dialect areas and geographical distances.

24. A notable exception being regular trading partners or "brothers and sisters" among the Min.

25. Marriages were occasionally contracted by the Fly River Aekyom with more distant people, such as the Yonggom. But no enduring alliances seem to have been established at this level.

26. As implied above, security circles were not permanent or static arrangements. They were subject to change, modification or even dissolution, depending on local social and political contingencies. According to my informants, otherwise hostile Aekyom hamlets might also combine forces in order to wage war on "externally defined" enemies such as the Pare or Yonggom. But these arrangements were temporary and structurally more unstable than security circles.

27. It is my understanding that the purpose of the decorations is to acquire the odour and appearance of the spirits of the dead.

28. The most characteristic feature of the sawei plant is the presence of thorns on its stalk and stem. The term sawei also denotes a variety of fish which in Aekyom mythology assumes the anthropomorphic qualities of the warrior. Significantly, bro also refers to a type of flat-headed, medium sized fish frequently caught and eaten by the Aekyom.

29. Curiously I uncovered no other references to "war masks" among the Aekyom. It is interesting, however, that many features of ritual display during war parallel aspects of male initiation rites among the Aekyom.

30. Austen (1922:21) appears to have recorded a similar attitude on his patrol of first contact in the Alice River region. He states, "the tribes on both sides of the Tedi quite openly admitted the practice of eating human flesh, but they stated it is only an enemy that is killed in war that is eaten".

31. Significantly, Aekyom classify animals and humans on the basis of

meat (saio) categories. Equally important, the symbolism of war and hunting suggest that each is the extension of the other (cf. Gell, 1975:116).

32. My informants consciously drew comparisons between pandanus juice and blood. In Aekyom mythology pandanus juice is blood.

33. The name "Tumenai" is of uncertain origin. It may mean "owners of nose-plugs" from tume ("nose plug") and nai ("belonging to").

34. As Table 2 shows, the name "Drimgas" was in use by the time of first contact in 1952.

35. According to my informants, Tumenai was abandoned since it became a place of "too much sorcery".

36. These include the pooling of cash for village development projects, representation in the Kiunga Local Government Council by the same village councillor, establishment of political meetings relating to the promotion of social, health and educational services, and participation in dance ceremonials.

Footnotes to Chapter 4.

1. Certain other themes not developed here are discussed in detail by Barth (1971, 1982). See also Welsch (1979, 1980).

2. Among other Highland societies a focus on garden fertility, growth and spiritual matters is also central to principles of group formation and identity. But social forms such as clans and lineages or their ideological representations are articulated more openly (e.g., Salisbury, 1965; Strathern, 1973).

3. This is confirmed by informants' statements as well as mythology where members of a clan acknowledge common origins and common clan ancestors (Welsch, 1979: 27, 28). The narrative modelling of descent which documents ancestral origins among the Aekyom (see Chapter 6) shows that name-based ancestries are more concerned with relationships between cross sex sibilings and affines than with formulaic pairings or segmentation between males on either a vertical (e.g., father and son) or horizontal (e.g., male siblings) kinship axis (cf. Forge, 1972:537; Kelly, 1977).

4. This is not a shortcoming of Welsch (1979) since the work in question was more concerned with the immediate issue of land claims and compensation in the Ok Tedi Area. To my knowledge, the relevant ethnography dealing with the place of maternal descent in Ningerum society remains unpublished.

5. "Sub-clans which are not segmented compete on an equal basis with the segments of other sub-clans and there is no more cohesion between sub-sub-clan segments than that between segments of different clan names. Once segmented, sub-clans and sub-sub-clans form independent political units and in the past local sub-sub-clan segments would fight with and kill members of other local groups who have the same clan and sub-clan names as readily as they would any other local group" (Welsch, 1979:28).

6. The languages spoken by the Ningerum and Star Mountains people belong to the Ok language family (Tolisano, 1980).

7. "There are no legends regarding the origin of the clans, and there is nothing to be learned on the subject of fission or the emergence of new clans from old ones, which must surely have taken place. The native view is that all clans have always existed and will always continue to exist. The founders of the clans are unknown." (Pouwevers, 1964:137).

8. Interestingly, Pouwer (1964:137) comments that the mythical father of the original brother/sister couple in one tribe is a marsupial called (awot). This creature may well be arboreal.

9. Some informants preferred to reside permanently in the hamlets, rarely venturing into the village and never to the "corner". The population from all these locations I refer to as the "ethnographic population".

10. Unfortunately, comparative data on relationship terminologies of the Ok Tedi Area is incomplete, especially for lowland societies. The available evidence does, however, suggest the Aekyom case may be unique (see Craig, 1969; Healey, 1962; Pouwer, 1964).

11. For example, the genealogical specification FF (father's father) for the relationship term kiguam is phrased in Aekyom as nai yai, "my father, his father".

12. For example, FMBSD (father's mother's brother's son's daughter). Such terms could, however, be inferred from actual genealogical grids in conjunction with informants' reference/address terms for the corresponding kinship status.

13. In Needham's (1973) terms the Aekyom terminology indicates asymmetric prescriptive alliance.

14. Rinaen was never spontaneously given to me by informants among the

Fly River Aekyom and I never heard it being used in day to day activities between husband and wife. The term is more frequently encountered among the Alice River Aekyom, at least as a linguistic category. In this context, rinaen appears to consist of the elements ri, "Raggiana Bird of Paradise", and aen, indicating perhaps feminine gender. Upon marriage, mote is dropped as a relationship term and may be replaced by the complementary terms knu/ala. As parents, a married couple use teknonyms in situations of address or reference. The use of personal names by husband and wife is not a traditional practice (see Chapter 5).

15. I could find no other reference to sene as a word in Aekyom language and culture. However, it seems to be the root of psene, which is the generic term for sago or tree grub. Significantly, psene figure as totemic ancestors in Aekyom mythology.

16. The Aekyom do not have special terms for "wife-givers" and "wife-takers" as in some other societies (e.g., Leach, 1954; Lévi-Strauss, 1969; Needham, 1962)). The terms alanai ("owners of women") and knunai ("belonging to, taken by, men") do not refer to distinctive categories but rather represent attempts by the Aekyom to give a reasonable response to questions about the givers and takers of wives.

17. Some informants stated that they used gute(n)kolei for fun; it was a kind of joke (klaeklaemen). However, as the text below implies, joking has important structural implications (cf. Gell, 1975).

18. While knu is more frequently used in reference to humans (wíkè), kolei is more frequently used in reference to animals and plants. Thus mine kolei, "male pig" or "boar", monai kolei, "male cassowary". Kolei is opposed to aengei, the marker of female gender in the plant and animal world. Interestingly, aengei is not used in the gender classification of humans. For this purpose, ala ("woman, female") is used exclusively.

19. That the aepei-gmore relationship is crucial in determining agnatic identity is also reflected in Aekyom mythology. Given the identification

of males with meat, it is striking that in a tale about the origin of game animals the aepei is tranformed into categories of meat by her gmore.

20. It follows that according to the same asymmetrical patterning, ZSD = DD for a male ego.

21. For example, on one occasion I accompanied a man and his aepua (classificatory MB) on a fishing expedition. The aepua, being the junior of the two and only a small boy, performed tasks directed by his much older aentmin (classificatory ZS) who seemed to be in general control of the expedition. But where age and terminological level do coincide the reverse is unquestionably and invariably the behaviour expected. A significant exception is in the context of male initiation rites where an initiated but junior aepua inititates his senior but novice aentmin. Today, when male initiation has been delayed for some males, this arrangement is not unusual.

22. Literally, "Yesterday their penes moving up and down yesterday log broke".

23. Kia may also be used as a term of reference regardless of age status and, therefore, refers to the more general notion of "child" or "offspring".

24. Duwene is derived from the verb duwe, "to cook".

25. Traditionally, men did not and could not marry if they were not initiated. Today, some one have married although all informants agreed that to do so, without being initiated, is very difficult.

26. Khwiree is almost phonetically indistinguishable from khwire, the Alice River Aekyom term for "hornbill". The Fly River Aekyom call the hornbill, kbilei. Interestingly, bropen seems to consist of the segments bro meaning "war club" or "fish species" and pen which is the term for "mouth of a river" (e.g., wai pen, "river mouth", mali pen, "mouth of the

Mali river"). It is also interesting to note that widowers may return to the bachelors' house to live, especially if they have no living children.

27. Significantly, the most frequently stated reason for adultery or divorce is that women "see young men". Also, the practice of infant betrothal traditionally tightened a man's grip on the supply of potential wives.

28. Traditionally, male and female bathing areas are kept separate. In Drimgas village, male frequent places upstream while females perform their ablutions downstream.

29. The following items are wrapped in tree bark in order to "protect the house" or assist the hunter in pursuit of game: the head, tail piece and belly fat of the monitor lizard (asia); beak of the black cockatoo (kansi); giant rat's (dumga) teeth; and the claws and beak of the eagle (kuni).

30. Interesting, male hunting is always associated with magic when carried out in the deep jungle. While my informants were generally reluctant to discuss hunting magic, whose spells are highly coveted and guarded, it struck me that hunting magic is less concerned with ensuring practical success than with making the hunter "acceptable" to the domain he is about to enter and to the animals he is about to pursue. While my data are not sufficient to fully confirm this view, comparative evidence on hunting and religious issues (e.g., Goldman, 1975) suggest that it is a reasonable assumption for the Aekyom case.

31. T'ute "breasts" is phonetically similar to tute "housewall", a relationship that is not inconsistent with the image of the house as a female body.

32. Monai seems to consist of the element mo, often used as a personal name, which some informants claim is an abbreviation of "cassowary", and the possessive nai, meaning "belonging to" or "identify with". This is consistent with the totemic status of the cassowary which, according to Aekyom mythology, gave birth to individual tongesu and/or all Aekyom people.

33. The quality of being cold (objects) is expressed by the adjective k'yokin. Cold food, on the other hand, is qualified by the adjective dru. Hot or cooked (food) is duwene, in contrast to raw (food) which is ine. Ine seems to be the root of rine, which denotes female space within the house and the jungle.

34. One of the main features of male initiation rites is the male initiation house or komenai built level to the ground in the rine or deep jungle. All komenai are named in association with birds of paradise. The komenai with which I was most familiar was called skite hionai or "nest of the splendid bird of paradise". The symbolism of the rites generally depict the process of reproduction in the bird world. The symbolic enactment of sexual intercourse within a spiritual realm is followed by the emergence of the novices from the egg/nest, ritually controlled "molting" and eventual "display" among the treetops. Significantly, the verb geisili ties together the themes of fire and birth within the initiation context since it means "to roast" or "to hatch from an egg".

35. Asia and wandu are rarely seen since they occupy the deeper reaches of the forest. Aekyom describe them as dangerous adversairies during the hunt and it is not unusual for encounters between the hunter and his prey to result in serious injury fromthe former. Monitor lizards are especially appropriate idioms of rebirth or transformation since they have the power to change their skins, like snakes (see below).

36. Hu means "black", "night"; akun may be translated as "day". Aekyom categories of time include the following distinctions for a 24-hour period:

Aekyom Term	English Equivalent
ukan	morning
aku dulei	noon
t'ei p'ite	mid afternoon
dwen	late afternoon; early evening
hundulei	late evening

37. The possible objection that it is tonge not kiun that produces life-giving and life-sustaining friction cannot be sustained. What is of interest here is the general category stone or ike and its implications for stone-related categories: in this case a group (tongesu) and a relationship term, kiunkia. However, stone axes are also closely tied to reproduction and its conditions. For example, stone axes are used to cut down sago trees, an act that not only has sexual connotations in Aekyom society but elsewhere in New Guinea and other parts of the world (Ruddle et al., 1978). Furthermore, sago is the source of semen, a principle of fertility recognized by the Aekyom. See also the text below.

38. The link between pig bones and sexuality is quite explicit in Aekyom mythology. After being shot with an arrow, the first pig staggers to the headwaters of a creek where its uncooked flesh simply rots away, leaving its bones. From the bones sprouted the first sago trees.

39. That fire/light are signs of resurrection is a fact reflected in Aekyom mythology. When Akunguam's people see the light of the torch they vomit. As recorded elsewhere throughout the world, vomiting symbolizes a change of state, or a transformation of fundamental being (see, for example, Goldman, 1975; Walens, 1980).

40. One type of cultivated sago palm is called hwi. See Table 5, Chapter 2.

41. Yaeminkei appears to contain the qualifier in, from ine, meaning "raw".

42. Male informants told me that the middle finger is often used as a phallus by younger unmarried boys in the company of unmarried girls. In other cases, it seems that older married men use the middle finger as a phallus for intercourse with wives considered to be too "small" to receive their husband's penis.

43. Men do not, for example, cradle their 20 year old daughters in their laps.

44. In addition to other functions, larger string bags are used to carry small babies.

45. It might reasonably be objected that the equation bule = MH, follows from the practice of leviratic marriage and the general asymmetrical character of the relationship terminology. But there is no convincing statistical evidence that the FyB (bule) is any more likely to inherit the marriage relationship from the F than is the FeB (kiguam), and, therefore, there seems to be no logical reason why bule rather than kiguam is the chosen category on this basis alone. On the other hand, kiguam's (FeB) seniority, suggests priority in such matters, which is consistent with my observations.

46. It has already been suggested that houses are metaphorical or living beings whose gender identities are naturally, not ritually, given as female. Similarly, string bags are wombs.

47. Unfortunately, I was unable to gather sufficient material on birth rites etc. given my sex status. However, pregnancy and birth are surrounded by a variety and number of food taboos which, if violated, invite spiritual sanctions.

48. Men who have moved to one of Kiunga's "corners" often prefer to return to their mother's natal hamlet or village when it is time to "get back to the bush". Yet at the same time, many express uneasy feelings about returning to or being in their mother's rather than an agnate's hamlet of origin.

49. In addition to a concern with curing illnesses, sia is performed on a variety of other occasions which include the inauguration of a hamlet domestic house, pre-marriage ceremonials (where bachelors are "on display" for potential wives) and the reciprocal obligations of mortuary rites. See Depew (1982) for a more detailed discussion.

50. Menstruation is considered to be a "death", similar to other deaths

that involve the shedding of blood. Thus, it is not a linguistic accident that the menstrual hut and men's hunting house, which is associated with the killing of animals and the shedding of their blood, are both called slewe. Sle is a cryptic reference to the penis or slebrine. Traditionally, girls are married prior to first menstruation, while hunting for meat is identified with the role of the husband. These themes are brought together in the image of moon who hunts tei animals at night. Bearing in mind that tei animals (cuscus, bandicoot, rat, etc.) are inherently female, it is striking that the term for menstruation is dwarin deira, or "moon seen". It follows that the identity of tei is closely tied to the themes of marriage and social reproduction.

51. A digging stick used to dig the vegetable garden which will produce crops is called kai, whose root is ai.

52. The most immediate confirmation of these ideas is given in Aekyom attitudes towards fish. Fish, like the rivers and streams that bear them, are anthropomorphic beings.

53. In Aekyom collective representations the pig is symbolic of the female, motherhood and maternal aspects of descent.

54. Also, considerable grief is displayed by aepei (and sisters in general) on the death of a brother. While it is customary for women to wail during the mortuary rites, individual aepei may be moved to emotional peaks. On one occasion, aepei entered the grave of her gmore and, crying "uncontrollably" began to hit the ground and throw the soil through the air. Later, she had to be literally taken from the grave in order for the burial to proceed.

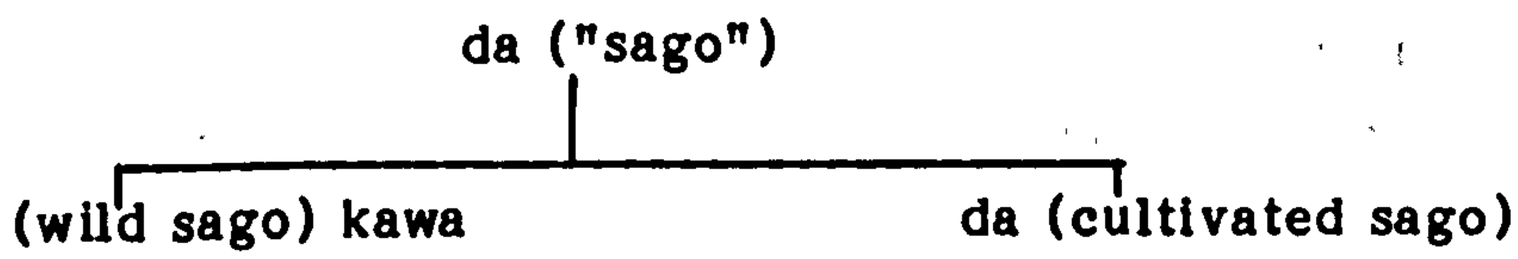
55. How long the injunction is in place seems to vary. It is striking, however, that the hunting of cassowary in particular must be preceded by ritual performance in the hamlet house. Otherwise, the hunt will not be "accepted" by the cassowary, which will not readily offer itself to the hunter. Given the close ties between brother and sister and their

cooperative relations, it is fitting that the father's spirit assist the hunter in the pursuit of the cassowary.

56. Bearing in mind that fish are killed at fish weirs placed across creek mouths, the constellation of ideas here is more accurately an expression of rebirth. Significantly, in a story about why birds live in trees, fish and birds engage one another in warfare. Although many birds flee to the treetops, a male domain, those unable to escape the fish on the ground are killed, never to return to life. However, all the fish killed during the battle are reborn and return to their house beneath the surface of the river.

57. The cassowary is regarded by all informants to be a member of its own class (monai ka tei) and is definitely not a bird (smele).

58. All forms of Aekyom classification of the natural world frequently assume this form, especially those that have a direct bearing on the human world. For example, the classification of cultivated and wild sago assumes the familiar pattern:



The element of ambiguity in this form of classification parallels the ambiguity observed at the level of social classification. See below and Chapter 5.

59. Significantly, both uninitiated ("uncooked") boys and the universe of raw meat are covered by the term one (see Depew, 1982).

60. For example, just prior to inflorescence the sago palm is at its highest level of starch content (the source of semen), a fact also recognized by the Aekyom. But flowering in the sago palm uses up the starch or reduces its starch content and therefore its status as a source

of semen. Then the palm dies.

61. Their names, from eldest to youngest are Du, Snaeke, Gima, Guapei and Siamsiake.

62. In the myth is is said that the stone was sitting in the water.

63. Such shame, however, does not extend to all categories of unmarried men, such as widowers (bropen) and bachelors (kwaten knu).

64. In the case of gute or other marriages considered to be "not good", the prevailing relationship terminology remains intact with respect to relevant categories of relatives.

65. Table 15.a also shows that sometimes males or females may reside with their mother's brother (aepua). House no. 18, for example, accommodates the owner's ZS, ZD and the latter's children as well as husband. The nephews and niece moved into their mother's brother's house on the death of their own father. In this particular example, the owner of the house and his ZDH are "bush associates" (Duduyene Demesuke and Graihei Drim, respectively) who use the terminology of agnatic relationship. For the Drim man, his residence may be considered uxorilocal, but this is not a "rule" of post marital residence. Furthermore, uxorilocality is statistically rare.

66. It should be pointed out that patrol officers used the phrase "hamlet group" ambiguously. It is clear from the patrol reports that this phrase refers to single hamlets and hamlets grouped together on the basis of nominal associations (e.g., Drimgas). Here a "hamlet group" would include neighbouring or adjacent hamlets. Patrol maps which locate Aekyom settlements in the 1950s show that the majority of settlement names refer to hamlet groups as nominal associations.

67. According to my informants, "first marriages" contracted between two lines are based on the exchange of sisters, but succeeding marriages

should follow the normative orientation of asymmetrical cross cousin marriage.

68. The inclusion of these absentees is justified on two grounds. First, incarceration and emigration are due to external, European influences or constraints. Second, their omission would unnecessarily distort the sex ratio of 105, which is consistent with the range of sex ratios recorded in previous years for the population associated with Drimgas village: e.g., 109 (1956), 105 (1975), 109 (1980). Sources: Patrol Census Reports, 1956, 1975, 1980; Office of the Assistant District Commissioner, Kiunga.

69. There were, for example no instances of re-marriage into either a monogamous or polygamous union during the period of my fieldwork. Otherwise, instances of re-marriage would have required an analytical shift to roles (e.g., husband, wife) when presenting the data in the form of tables.

70. For example, marriages contracted prior to or shortly after 1950 but no longer viable are included in the pre-contact/early post-contact sample of marriages, regardless of whether the spouses involved in the marriages are living today or not.

71. Four of these involve the exchange of genealogical sisters, while 27 cases involve no more than one terminological sister.

72. For a general overview of the impact of Christian mission activity on Aekyom traditional rites and ceremonies, see Depew (1982).

73. Today, the notion of "marriage as a purchase" appears to have gained a foothold in some areas as brideprice may be unusually high — up to K1000. Yet, in the wake of these changes, traditional marriage seems more a convenient medium for securing individual purchasing power than the essence of an economic tranaction which defines it. That economic concepts distort the meaning of Aekyom marriages is also suggested by the Aekyom themselves when they protest that excessive brideprice is a

feature of marriage exported by the Yonggom and therefore culturally incongruent with the Aekyom version.

74. The sia dance ceremonial which is described in detail in Depew (1982) is performed on the following occasions: (i) inauguration of a domestic hamlet house; (ii) reciprocation of mortuary services; (iii) curing rites and health seances; and (iv) courtship.

75. Today the decentralization of hamlets usually makes this journey unnecesary. Also ceremonial exchanges may alternate between the bride's and groom's natal hamlets. If the bride and groom are domiciled in the same hamlet, as may be the case for hamlets owned jointly by different but intermarrying tongesu, all proceedings will be confined to this house and its surroundings.

76. With the exception of skwene, which is an asymmetrical prestation to the bride's group only.

77. If unsuccessful, the pattern will be repeated until a bush turkey is killed.

78. In another tale about how the bird of paradise (worin) got its feathers, a tei animal, rat, originally wore the feathers. However, rat removes them in order to eat some sago from a sago log, a symbolic representation of sexual intercourse. Seeing the feathers lying on the ground, worin puts them on and then flies away. Rat protests, but worin simply re-asserts his claim to the beautiful feathers.

79. Like aela sukmen gwae, the pule deme bi gwae is made from gon tree bark fibres and, therefore, is also on the "men's side". Equally suggestive of the idea of "rebirth" is the placement of one string bag (or "stomach/womb") inside another.

80. Twalitila, or "warrior", includes the verb tila, which also refers to sexual intercourse.

81. Aekyom compare, linguistically and symbolically, the human elbow with holes in tree knots (deigwotenam), the latter being a favourite nesting place for the monitor lizard, a transformational figure in Aekyom symbolism who gives birth to certain birds, particularly the hornbill.

82. It was pointed out to me that eels (giawai) have "two skins" while prawns (ansaio) shed their bone-like shells.

83. A dream (an deone) is continuous with everyday life and is not regarded by the Aekyom as a discrete or "unreal" category of experience. Thus, in a dream one's spirit (wíkè dulei) "wanders around" performing activities that parallel those of wakeful life. Significantly, dreams about women and bush turkeys are interconnected at the level of sexuality and killing.

84. This idea is reflected in Aekyom mortuary practices. Once the flesh of kiguam's corpse has decomposed, the head (skull) is placed in a tree branch (above) while the body (bones) are buried in the ground (below). The association between the head and trees is also expressed in Aekyom mythology where a human head is transformed into the first breadfruit tree; or, more specifically, into the first breadfruit which hang from branches high above the ground.

85. Interestingly, novices bleed their legs over a creek prior to entering the komenai (male initiation house) where they are transformed into "birds" or, more accurately, into "cooked birds". See below.

86. In the story of how cassowary and hornbill got their feathers, it is the heavy tail feathers that are identified with flightlessness. Similarly, the opposition hand-wing reflects the separation of the cassowary from birds at the level of "natural" classification.

Footnotes to Chapter 5.

1. However, this does not preclude the identification of "wild" and "domestic" animals. Domestic and feral pigs, for example, are distinguished on the basis of the qualifiers aewene ("of the hosue") and tona or rinene ("of the spirits or bush"), respectively.

2. My informants seemed divided over the issue of whether or not these languages and customs are mutually unintelligible or foreign.

3. Before entering the komenai where the novices are transformed ("hatched") as "birds", they must eat pig and cassowary excrement. Elsewhere, in Aekyom mythology, rebirth is premised on the conjunction of meat (of the cassowary) and excrement (from pigs, dogs and humans).

4. Pigs are also closely associated with birds at the level of personal names. See below.

5. In some cases, males and females have assumed Christian names. However, these do not usually displace traditional Aekyom names. Rather, they are considered to be foreign additional names.

6. Significantly, male practices link the growth and maturation of the penis to the wild pandanus. Boys will place some of their pubic hair in a split root of the wild pandanus tree. Then, when the penis has beome "big", the boy will remove the root which contains the pubic hair.

7. It may also be noted here that the foetus eats what the mother eats, namely meat (a "male" food) and sago (a "female" food). These views contrast with those of some other New Guinea societies where, for example, the father's semen is considered to be the foetus' food (e.g., Gell, 1975).

8. Excrement is also produced by eating various plants or their leaves,

bananas, pandanus, etc. While the eating of sago also produces excrement, it is the only source of semen. Significantly, plant "meat" or drike is compared to the meat of the cassowary which is also called drike. Bird meat, on the other hand, is known as smele saio which compares with human meat or wíkè saio.

9. For example, the first male ancestor of the Gre tongesu of Duduyene hamlet is called Worin Penai, "Bird of Paradise at/of the river mouth".

Footnotes to Chapter 6.

1. This discussion of Boas' views on the nature of myth draws to a considerable extent on the ideas expressed in Cove (1983). This work also provides an important source of ideas on the properties of myth.

2. This is suggested by the development or "birth" of the fruit as a tree product, then the emergence or "rebirth" of the boy from the fruit.

3. It may also be the case that the snakes' teeth are "reborn" as sago palms. Elsewhere in Aekyom mythology, sago palms appear as the transforms of pig bones.

4. M_{2a} states quite clearly that the women and children see sawei standing in the water well. Significantly, no words are exchanged between them, a feature that indicates their mutual spiritual ambience.

5. Similar to the role of the echo which is identified with the spiritual "side" of human speech in M_1, footprints left in the mud by the fish following their rout of the birds identify the spiritual aspects of "walking around" (i.e., growth, development and renewal). See also M_3 for a discussion of the symbolic significance of the legs (and feet).

6. In other Aekyom myths, the corners of the house are sites of supernatural transformations and transitions. Similarly, the manipulation of ashes in the house is associated with the transformation of supernatural powers (see, for example, the ritual preparation of warriors described in Chapter 3).

APPENDIX 2.

AEKYOM MYTHS

M_4 How Kmu Bird Tricked Flying Fox by Kwani

Old man kmu and his cousin (mote) flying fox were once the same. They both had feathers, tail feathers, everything. Then one day kmu decided to trick flying fox. Kmu made flying fox wings and everything else that flying fox has today. Then kmu said, "Cousin, let me show you something; come here". Kmu took off his own feathers and then put on the wings of a flying fox. He put on everything that flying foxes have today and they fit. So off they flew until they came to the u tree and landed on the branch. When they got there they started jumping up and down. But flying fox lost his balance, fell and hung on to the branch upside down. After that they flew off to the kwa tree. Kmu got there first and sat on the branch. Along came flying fox, but instead of sitting down on the branch he was hanging upside down. While kmu jumped up and down on the branch, flying fox tried to sit up, but he couldn't do it. As kmu jumped up and down, he tried to "make" his cousin flying fox sit upright but it didn't work. So off they flew to another kwa tree. Again, kmu arrived first and began jumping up and down. But when flying fox landed, all he could do was to hang upside down. Kmu was jumping trying to get flying fox to sit up. He tried and tried but couldn't get flying fox to sit upright. And flying fox struggled to sit upright but he couldn't do it. Then kmu said, "Oh cousin, I've won. I've won already. You won't win. I tricked you." So flying fox got rid of his feathers and put on flying fox wings and everything else that flying foxes have today. He uses only those wings. But kmu put his feathers back on and everything was all right. So that's how kmu tricked flying fox.

M_5 Day and Night by Kwani

The old man Akunguam (Day-Man) knows only the day. Akunguam, his wives and children live in the day only. They get pig, cassowary, snake, goanna, tei animals and birds. They take them up to the house and eat them only in the day. They collect and eat meat in the day only. They sleep in the day only. They wake up and do this all over again — hunt, eat and sleep in the day. That's how it is for Akunguam. And old man Hunguam (Night-Man), he goes down in the morning to get the tree grease (resin) in the bush. He eat the tree grease and lights it (as a torch). He eats then sleeps. He knows night and day. In the morning he goes to the bush again and gets other food — pig, cassowary, snake, goanna, tei animals, birds underground spiders, anything. He eats then sleeps. He does this night and day. One day, Akunguam went out walking. He headed towards the place where Hunguam stays. As he walked around Hunguam's place he noticed pieces of torch string scattered on the ground. He followed the trail till he came to a house and gardens. There he saw tree gardens, plenty of bananas, taro and other kinds of plants. Then he went up to the house, opened the door, went inside and closed it. Once inside, he saw pan ri (torch pieces) everywhere. He asked himself, "How did my cousin (mote) do this?" While he was in the house Akunguam heard his cousin Hunguam returning with his family. They came with everything — food, pigs, dogs, old women. When they went into the

house, insects of the night began to sing — kon, yoyolei. The birds of the night — hwihwi and sapko — they too began to sing. Akunguam thought, "What is going to happen?" Then Hunguam said, "What is your name?" and the reply was, "I am Akunguam." Then Akunguam asked, "And you, what is your name?" He said, "I am Hunguam and this is my place." Akunguam stayed and was thinking that his cousin was going to live the way he does — i.e., as a day-person. After that they ate sago. Then hwihwi and sapko started to sing and darkness began to set in. Akunguam then said, "Cousin, what is going to happen? — these birds are calling and it is getting dark." Hunguam said, "Nothing." Akunguam replied, "I used to hunt, eat and sleep in the day only." Hunguam then said, "I look for food in the day until it gets dark. Then I come to the house, eat and sleep in the night. Night is going to come." Then it began to get dark. Somewhat startled Akunguam said, "What will I do?" He stayed but went outside to a rubbish pile where he found the bamboo for boiling and cooking breadfruit which had been tossed there. He got hwihwi, sapko, banai, renai, yoyolei, kokone, put them inside the bamboo and covered the end with a leaf. He returned to the house and his cousin said, "Let's sleep." Although he was frightened, Akunguam slept. At daybreak Hunguam gave him some food and, taking the bamboo with the night creatures inside it, Akunguam returned to his own place. He put the bamboo, as well as tree grease and torch, inside his house. He went about putting meat inside the house and his family thought that things would be the same as before — that they would eat and sleep in the day. But when they were in the house it began to get dark. Frightened, Akunguam's people said, "What is going to happen? Where did you go yesterday?" Akunguam replied, "I went to my cousin's house. I went to his place where it gets dark. I went to my cousin Hunguam's house. I saw my cousin." Then he said, "You stay here, it will get dark." He told them what was going to happen. They stayed. It was getting dark. Akunguam got the bamboo, pulled out the leaf and all the birds and insects flew out, and as they sang it grew dark. Hwihwi and sapko were singing. Again, his family said, "What is going to happen?" He said, "Nothing. Yesterday I slept when it got dark like this." They heard the insects singing. All those creatures were singing. It got darker and darker, so Akunguam lit the torch. When Akunguam's family saw the torch fire their stomachs began to swell up and then they vomited. All of them were vomiting. Then they slept and when morning came Akunguam said, "You felt it. My cousin is Hunguam and I am Akunguam. Now we are living the way of Hunguam."

M_6 **How the Priangei River Joined the Fly River** by Osli

Osala and Kriamsala were at the headwaters of Priangei River and they were digging a hole trying to catch a bandicoot. They took off their grass skirts, broke off the leaves of a branch and proceeded to hang their skirts on the branch. They kep on digging. They kept on digging until they saw a rock in the hole. They pulled out the rock and threw it away. Then the water that had been in the hole began to rise and flowed out of the hole. The two women turned away and got their grass skirts. Then the elder sister went to one side of the water and the younger sister went

to the other side. They tried to imitate the insects named banai and renai but instead they said "nume nume nume" [i.e., they became the ninum insect].

M_7 Origin of Gre by Griawo

My people, we walked around like pigs. An old woman named Osala was cutting and beating the kiome sago. She left it there and came back to the house. An old man named Wi went down to where Osala had cut and beat the sago and waited for pigs. He caught two of them. They pigs were trying to squeal like pigs do but instead they shouted like humans do. Wi had caught a male and a female pig, went back to the house and fed them. Then those pigs turned into a man and a woman. When they became human they said to each other, "Sister, brother". Then the brother married the sister and soon they gave birth. We are the piglets. We came from the pigs. Our tei came from those pigs. So we are pigs; we do as the pig does until we change ourselves into humans again. Those pigs bore children and only pigs gave brith to our people, our tei. They kept on giving birth. Those people who came from pigs walked around for a long time. Then the old man, Wi, said, "Can the two of you — brother and sister — marry one another?" And the old woman, Osala, said, "Yes, the two of you can marry." So they became husband and wife, bore children and now we are here.

APPENDIX 3.

AEKYOM MARRIAGE PATTERNS

I. Marriage Exchanges by Group: Pre- and Post-Contact Samples

	Reference Group		Direction of Exchange	Exchange Group			
	Hamlet	Tongesu		Hamlet	Tongesu	No.	%
1.	Graihei	Drim	gives wives to:	Piduwenai	Gre	8	42
				Skikokei	Gre	2	11
				Hutienai	Dua	1	5
				Mnaembi	Gondok	1	5
				Trienkokei	Somi	2	11
				Trienkokei	Gasei	2	11
				Dnitonai	Gasei	1	5
				Graihei	Drim	1	5
					Grupe	1	5
				TOTALS:		19	100%
			receives wives from:	Piduwenai	Gre	4	18
				Skikokei	Gre	5	23
				Hutienai	Dua	6	27
				Manembi	Gondok	1	5
				Duduyene	Demesuke	1	5
				Trienkokei	Somi	1	5
				Graihei	Drim	1	5
					Grupe	1	5
					Reme	1	9
				TOTALS:		22	102%
2.	Piduwenai	Gre	gives wives to:	Graihei	Drim	4	9
				Skikokei	Gre	5	12
				Piduwenai	Mia	3	7
				Dnitonai	Gasei	4	9
				Trienkokei	Gasei	6	14
				Duduyene	Demesuke	1	2
				Dupei	Demesuke	3	7
				Tentu	Somi	1	2
				Duduyene	Somi	1	2
				Somkrienai	Somi	4	9
				Trienkokei	Somi	4	9
				Tmansawenai	Somi	4	9
				Kmom	Somi	2	5
				Mnaembi	Gondok	1	2
				TOTALS:		43	98%
			receives wives from:	Graihei	Drim	8	31
				Skikokei	Gre	2	8
				Dnitonai	Gasei	2	8
				Trienkokei	Gasei	4	15
				Mnaembi	Gondok	1	4
				Tentu	Somi	3	12
				Trienkokei	Somi	2	8
				Dmidunai	Gre	2	8
					Grupe	1	4
					Huli	1	4
				TOTALS:		26	102%

Reference Group		Direction of Exchange	Exchange Group			
Hamlet	Tongesu		Hamlet	Tongesu	No.	%
3. Skikokei	Gre	gives wives to:	Graihei	Drim	5	38
			Piduwenai	Gre	2	15
			Piduwenai	Mia	1	8
			Dnitonai	Gasei	2	15
			Dupei	Demesuke	1	8
			Tentu	Somi	2	15
			TOTALS:		13	99%
		receives wives from:	Graihei	Drim	2	20
			Piduwenai	Gre	1	10
			Piduwenai	Mia	1	10
			Dnitonai	Gasei	1	10
			Dupei	Demesuke	2	20
			Tentu	Somi	2	20
				Siriap	1	10
			TOTALS:		10	100%
4. Dnitonai	Gasei	gives wives to:	Piduwenai	Gre	2	33
			Skikokei	Gre	1	17
			Mnaembi	Gondok	1	17
			Trienkokei	Somi	1	17
				Grupe	1	17
			TOTALS:		6	101%
		receives wives from:	Graihei	Drim	1	11
			Piduwenai	Gre	4	44
			Skikokei	Gre	3	33
			Trienkokei	Gasei	1	11
			TOTALS:		9	99%
5. Trienkokei	Gasei	gives wives to:	Piduwenai	Gre	4	31
			Dnitonai	Gasei	1	8
			Dupei	Demesuke	3	23
				Grupe	2	15
				Bike	3	23
			TOTALS:		13	100%
		receives wives from:	Piduwenai	Gre	6	75
			Graihei	Drim	2	25
			TOTALS		8	100%

	Reference Group		Direction of Exchange	Exchange Group			
	Hamlet	Tongesu		Hamlet	Tongesu	No.	%
6.	Duduyene	Demesuke	gives wives to:	Graihei	Drim	1	17
				Hutienai	Dua	1	17
				Duduyene	Gre	3	50
				Duduyene	Somi	1	17
				TOTALS:		6	101%
			receives wives from:	Hutienai	Dua	1	10
				Piduwenai	Gre	1	10
				Duduyene	Somi	1	10
					Grupe	5	50
					Gwokei	1	10
					Sumpenai	1	10
				TOTALS:		10	100%
7.	Mnaembi	Gondok	gives wives to:	Topu	Ihene	4	33
				Graihei	Drim	1	8
				Piduwenai	Gre	1	8
				Piduwenai	Mia	2	17
				Trienkokei	Somi	1	8
				Somkrienai	Somi	1	8
					Grupe	1	8
					Ru	1	8
				TOTALS:		12	98%
			receives wives from:	Graihei	Drim	1	9
				Piduwenai	Gre	2	18
				Piduwenai	Mia	1	9
				Dnitonai	Gasei	1	9
				Dupei	Demesuke	3	27
				Tentu	Somi	3	27
				TOTALS:		11	99%
8	Topu	Ihene	gives wives to:	Piduwenai	Gre	1	20
				Hutienai	Dua	1	20
				Dupei	Demesuke	1	20
				Tentu	Somi	2	40
				TOTALS:		5	100%
			receives wives from:	Mnaembi	Gondok	3	50
				Tentu	Somi	1	17
				Trienkokei	Gasei	1	17
				Graihei	Drim	1	17
				TOTALS:		6	101%
9.	Duduyene	Somi	gives wives to:	Tentu	Somi	2	40
					Grupe	3	60
				TOTALS:		5	100%
			receives wives from:	Duduyene	Demesuke	2	33
				Tentu	Somi	2	33
				Piduwenai	Gre	1	17
					Siriape	1	17
				TOTALS:		6	100%

Reference Group		Direction of Exchange	Exchange Group			
Hamlet	Tongesu		Hamlet	Tongesu	No.	%
10. Dupei	Demesuke	gives wives to:	Trienkokei	Somi	9	50
			Tentu	Somi	4	22
			Somkrienai	Somi	1	6
			Mnaembi	Gondok	2	11
			Skikokei	Gre	2	11
			TOTALS:		18	100%
		receives wives from:	Trienkokei	Gasei	3	25
			Trienkokei	Somi	2	17
			Mnaembi	Gondok	1	8
			Piduwenai	Gre	3	25
			Skikokei	Gre	1	8
			Topu	Ihene	1	8
				Mepu	1	8
			TOTALS:		12	99%
11. Trienkokei	Somi	gives wives to:	Piduwenai	Gre	3	30
			Skikokei	Gre	1	10
			Dupei	Demesuke	2	20
			Mnaembi	Gondok	1	10
			Duduyene	SOmi	1	10
			Topu	Ihene	1	10
				Grupe	1	10
			TOTALS:		10	100%
		receives wives from:	Dupei	Demesuke	9	60
			Skikokei	Gre	1	7
			Mnaembi	Gondok	1	7
			Piduwenai	Mia	1	7
			Tentu	Somi	1	7
				Bike	2	13
			TOTALS:		15	101%
12. Tentu	Somi	gives wives to:	Mnaembi	Gondok	2	29
			Piduwenai	Gre	2	29
			Topu	Ihene	1	14
				Grupe	2	29
			TOTALS:		7	101%
		receives wives from:	Piduwenai	Gre	1	6
			Skikokei	Gre	2	12
			Dupei	Demesuke	4	24
			Topu	Ihene	2	12
				Bike	4	24
				Siriape	3	18
				Grupe	1	6
			TOTALS:		17	102%

Reference Group		Direction of Exchange	Exchange Group			
Hamlet	Tongesu		Hamlet	Tongesu	No.	%
13. Piduwenai	Mia	gives wives to:	Piduwenai	Gre	2	25
			Skikokei	Gre	1	13
			Trienkokei	Somi	1	13
			Mnaembi	Gondok	1	13
			Somkrienai	Somi	1	13
				Grupe	2	25
			TOTALS:		8	102%
		receives wives from:	Piduwenai	Gre	3	43
			Mnaembi	Gondok	2	29
			Griengas	Demesuke	2	29
			TOTALS:		7	101%
14. Duduyene	Gre	gives wives to:	Tmingondok	Gondok	1	
		receives wives from:	Duduyene	Demesuke	3	

II. Miscellaneous

1. Sister Exchange Marriages: No. of Cases
   (i) exchange of genealogical sisters: 4
   (ii) exchange involving at least one classificatory sister: 29

2. Leviratic Marriages: No. of Cases
   (i) involving genealogical brothers: 8
   (ii) involving classificatory brothers: 3

3. Sororal Polygny (2 genealogical sisters): No. of Cases
   (i) Simultaneous: 3
   (ii) serial: 5

4. Female Remarriage: No. of Cases
   (i) two marriages: 27
   (ii) three marriages: 4
   (iii) monogamous unions: 19
   (iv) polygamous unions: 12

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